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Vermont's Anti-Slavery and Underground Railroad Record

with a Map and Illustrations

BY

WILBUR H. SIEBERT

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Rodney V. Marsh, of Brandon, a prominent anti-slavery man of Vermont and keeper of an Underground station.

The Hon. Lawrence Brainerd, the leading anti-slavery man of Vermont and an Underground agent at St. Albans.

Joseph Poland, a newspaper editor and an Underground agent at Montpelier.

Col. Jonathan P. Miller, a noted abolitionist and an Underground agent in Montpelier.

Vermont's Anti-Slavery and Underground Railroad Record

with a Map and Illustrations

By

WILBUR H. SIEBERT

Ohio State University,

Columbus

Author of *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom, The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts, Loyalists in East Florida, 1774–1785* (two volumes), etc.

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VERMONT'S ANTI-SLAVERY

and

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD RECORD

I

SLAVE CASES IN VERMONT COURTS

Only a few slave cases appear in the court records of Vermont. In the early part of the Revolution a raid was made near Ticonderoga, and among the prisoners brought back were a slave woman, Dinah Mattis, and her infant Nancy, who were freed November 28, 1777, by Captain Ebenezer Allen. She was given a certificate of her emancipation, which was recorded by the town clerk of Bennington. Captain Allen stated in his certificate "To whom it may concern" that, according to a resolution passed by the Continental Congress, all prizes belonged "to the captivators," and therefore Dinah and her child had become the property of his detachment. He thought it "not right in the sight of God to keep slaves" and had secured the permission of his men to give her and her child their freedom. They were to have the right "to pass and repass anywhere through the United States of America," and Dinah was "to trade and traffic for herself and child as though she was born free without being molested by any person or persons."[1]

Late in July, 1783, Stephen Jacob, Esq., bought of a Mr. White a negro slave, also named Dinah, and took her to Windsor. She was said to have served him until 1800, when she became infirm, sick, and blind; and it was alleged that he then discarded her so that she became a charge upon the corporation of the town. Hence the selectmen and overseers

[1]E. P. Walton, ed., *Records of Governor and Council of State of Vermont, 1775–1777*, I, 93.

of the poor brought suit at the August term of 1802 in the State Supreme Court of Judicature for the recovery of $100, the sum they had expended for her care.

The plaintiffs, in support of her declaration, offered to submit to the jury the bill of sale for the slave from Mr. White to Mr. Jacob. But the counsel for the latter objected on the ground that the contract in the bill of sale was freed by the Vermont constitution, which prohibited slavery. The counsel for the plaintiffs argued that, while no person could hold a slave *de jure* under that instrument, nevertheless he might *de facto;* that under the Federal Constitution fugitive slaves escaping into Vermont must be delivered up to their masters; that under the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 State magistrates must aid in the arrest of fugitives, and if on examination they found them to be such they must certify them back to slavery and permit the masters or their agents to remove them from the State.

The counsel for the defendant took exception to the statement that Dinah had served Mr. Jacob during the period of his alleged ownership, and that he had cast her off when she had become helpless. They declared that she had continued in his family for several years only, when certain inhabitants of Windsor, having discovered that she was an excellent servant, had induced her to leave the family "by the syren songs of liberty and equality," and thereafter she had spent the vigor of her life with these people. However, when she was no longer capable of labor, they were trying to compel Mr. Jacob to maintain her. At the time that Dinah had been enticed from his service, he had not attempted by legal means to reclaim her, deciding that "he could not hold her as a slave" under the State constitution. The counsel asked whether it was equitable under these circumstances that their client should be required to support Dinah in the decrepitude of her old age? They maintained that the authorities of Windsor should have taken advantage of the act by which they could have warned her to leave the town.

Assistant Judge Royall Tyler held that if the bill of sale could by the State constitution bind the woman in slavery when brought within the State it ought to be admitted in

evidence, and the law would vest in the slaveholder a liability to maintain her through all the vicissitudes of life; otherwise the bill of sale would be void. But since the constitution declared that no person could hold a slave, the bill of sale did not operate here, and he was opposed to receiving it in evidence. Chief Judge Jonathan Robinson concurred in Judge Tyler's opinion, and the plaintiffs were nonsuited.[2]

In 1812 a slave was seized in Vermont as a fugitive by one Glen, but without a warrant from any officer mentioned in the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793. Moreover, evidence was lacking that the seizure was made for the purpose of carrying the fugitive before such an officer to obtain a certificate for his return to New York, the State from which he had fled. Glen had brought a suit for trespass against Hodges for taking his slave by a writ of attachment for debt. The Court ruled that there was no doubt that the negro was the property of Glen, that he had run away from service due under the laws of New York, and that the master was entitled to reclaim him under the fugitive slave clause of the Federal Constitution and under the act of Congress of 1793.[3]

A few years later Theophilus Harrington, a prominent judge of Vermont, tried the case of a fugitive slave in the town hall at Middlebury, but did not consider the undoubted evidence of ownership of sufficient weight to warrant his remanding the runaway back to slavery. Nothing short of "a bill of sale from God Almighty" would suffice for him to recognize ownership of slaves as valid. Evidently Middlebury was already a station on the western "trunk line" of the Vermont Underground system. At any rate Judge Harrington was expressing a sentiment which met with a general approval in his State.[4]

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[2] *Vermont Reports*, II, 192–201.

[3] 9 *Johns Reports*, 67.

[4] Cyrus Prindle, *Slavery Illegal*, 26; Rowland E. Robinson, *Out of Bondage and Other Stories*. (Centennial Edition, 1936), 5–6.

II

THE MULATTO MINISTER, LEMUEL HAYNES

An illuminating episode in the pioneer history of Vermont which shows the consideration given by its freedom-loving people to worth, even in a man of color, is the remarkable career of Lemuel Haynes, a mulatto who made a preaching tour through the State in 1785 and became the pastor of West Parish in Rutland three years later, a post held by him for thirty years, and of a parish in Manchester in the autumn of 1818, where he served for three years. These congregations were made up of white people.[1]

Mr. Haynes was thirty-five years old when he accepted his first regular appointment in Vermont. He was the illegitimate son of a negro slave and white, hired maid of West Hartford, Connecticut, and spent his boyhood in Granville, Massachusetts, where he worked for a pious farmer and gained a rudimentary education. When he was twenty-one (in 1774) he joined the Minute Men and as a Continental soldier accompanied the Massachusetts troops under Benedict Arnold against Fort Ticonderoga. Returning to Granville, after the campaign, he was encouraged to study for the ministry. He was examined and admitted to preach in the Congregational Church in 1780 and married a white girl he had converted three years later. He was regularly ordained and began his ministerial labors in 1785, the year in which he traveled through Vermont.[2]

His first church was in Torrington, Connecticut, and, although some of its members were not well pleased at having a colored minister, he remained there until he accepted

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[1]Charles E. Tuttle, Jr., of Rutland, Vt., has a very complete chapter on "Lemuel Haynes, Negro Preacher to a White Congregation" in his unpublished study on "Vermont and the Antislavery Movement." He has kindly permitted me to read his typed treatise.

[2]T. M. Cooley, *Sketches of Life and Character of the Rev. Lemuel Haynes*, 30–48, 63; *Jour. of Negro History*, Jan., 1919, pp. 22, 26; Samuel Orcutt, *Hist. of Torrington*, 475.

the call to Rutland. One man who entered the church and sat at first with his hat on, in evident disrespect of the preacher, was soon so favorably impressed with the sermon that he took his hat off and threw it under his seat. In 1797 J. A. Graham, then in London, paid a tribute to Mr. Haynes's success in the pulpit in his *Descriptive Sketch of the Present State of Vermont*, telling of his being the minister of the handsome meeting-house of the West Parish of Rutland. He asked whether Mr. Haynes's color at the great day would "be objected to by that Almighty Power who took him from the dust of earth and made him man." Mr. Graham had lived in Rutland, was a prominent lawyer, an aide-de-camp to Governor Chittenden, and knew Mr. Haynes well. During his pastorate Mr. Haynes more than tripled the size of his congregation and proved to be a magnetic revivalist.[3]

Other congregations frequently invited him to preach before them, and he was in demand to speak at ordinations, the dedications of new churches, and other religious functions. In 1804 he became the field secretary of the Connecticut Missionary Society and five years later of the Vermont Missionary Society. It was in 1805 that Mr. Haynes received the degree of Master of Arts from Middlebury College and attained a reputation extending beyond the bounds of Vermont by taking up the cudgels against Hosea Ballou, a clergyman of Boston, who was a leading Unitarian and Universalist and was then preaching at various places in Vermont. Mr. Ballou was invited to deliver a sermon in Mr. Haynes's church and the pastor was present. At the end of his discourse the visitor gave the pastor the opportunity to speak, and he did so, taking as his text Genesis iii:4, "And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die." He did not spare the guest speaker, going so far as to argue that the devil was the first and unceasing Universalist preacher. "The serpent before he set up preaching universal salvation was a cunning, beautiful and happy creature; but now his glory is departed. And the Lord said unto the

[3]Orcutt, *op. cit.*, 475; Vernon Loggins, *The Negro Author*, 120, 51; Cooley, *op. cit.*, 89–94.

serpent, 'Because thou hast done this thou art curst above all cattle and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly thou shalt go and dust thou shalt eat all the days of thy life.' " Mr. Haynes enlivened his sermon with satire and popular argumentation, which greatly pleased his audience and established his reputation as a caustic controversialist. His sermon was published and passed through six American editions within two years. Ultimately it reached twenty editions, including those which appeared in Great Britain. It became one of the most drastic and influential documents for confuting Universalists.[4]

The first appearance of the printed sermon evoked a letter from Mr. Ballou, which he published, denouncing his antagonist and the low cunning of his sermon. Of course, this did not silence Mr. Haynes, who published a reply. Others were drawn into the controversy, and the mulatto preacher's position among the eminent clergymen of Vermont was established.[5]

Mr. Haynes was not afflicted with a sense of inferiority in his preaching or his social relationships. He was on easy terms with his parishioners, being a welcome guest in their homes. Chief Justice Royall Tyler, poet and playwright, was his friend. He was intimate with the faculty of Middlebury College and was entertained in the house of Governor Bradley, who had won repute by fighting in Congress against the slave trade. He was witty and sometimes sarcastic in the pulpit and was not prevented by his color from denouncing the stupidity of his hearers or threatening them with hellfire.[5]

In 1814 Mr. Haynes was appointed a delegate by the General Convention of Ministers in Vermont to attend the General Association of Connecticut. This body invited him to preach. His sermon was well received by the audience, including eighty clergymen among whom was

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[4]Cooley, *op. cit.*, 93, 97, 136, 146; Loggins, *op. cit.*, 51; Maturin M. Ballou, *Biog. of Hosea Ballou*, 42; Cooley, *op. cit.*, 97; Lemuel Haynes, *Universal Salvation a Very Ancient Doctrine*, 6; Hosea Ballou, *Epistel to the Rev. Lemuel Haynes*, 4; John Peck, *Descant on the Universal Power*, 5; M. D. Gilman, *Bibliography of Vermont*, 118.

[5]Loggins, *op. cit.*, 120; Cooley, *op. cit.*, 79.

President Timothy Dwight of Yale College, who was moved to tears by the speaker's eloquence. Dr. Dwight also spoke highly of the sermon and of Mr. Haynes's "great usefulness in Vermont." In later years the discourse was recalled by Professor Silliman of Yale and President Humphrey of Amherst, both of whom were complimentary in their remarks about its author. That Mr. Haynes could win plaudits from an audience of this calibre proves his adaptability.[6]

His popularity drew him into the field of political addresses, where his qualities of incisive wit and sarcasm won applause. In course of time his conservatism led him to identify himself with the Federalist Party in Vermont, although he thereby drew apart from the majority of his congregation. He joined the Washington Benevolent Society, whose objects were to maintain the sound political views of the Father of his Country and to unite the conservative interests of the country. Even after the War of 1812, when Federalism was at a low ebb Mr. Haynes remained a Federalist and finally parted company with his congregation in April, 1818. However, the council of the church gave him a testimonial recommending him "as a tried and faithful minister of Jesus Christ," and he preached his farewell sermon at the age of sixty-five in the church where he had previously preached some five thousand five hundred discourses, four hundred of which had been funeral sermons. He had solemnized more than a hundred marriages, and he noted, with sadness, that there were only ten members of the church still living in Rutland who were there when he first came. While condemning the people for their religious stupidity, his heart went out to them and he confessed that he had not realized his attachment to them before this time of separation. Many disagreeable things had happened, but nevertheless he had spent many pleasant days with them and had enjoyed numerous delightful visits in their families.[7]

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[6]John Peck, *op. cit.*, 5; Cooley, *op. cit.*, 160, 162, 166–168.

[7]*Jour. of Negro History*, Jan., 1919, pp. 28–29; Cooley, *op. cit.*, 171–172, 199, 204.

Mr. Haynes received many calls to preach in other churches of the State and did not lack a Sunday pulpit from the day of his resignation in Rutland. After traveling throughout Vermont for six months, he accepted the call of a church in Manchester, where he served for three years. Mr. Haynes became the spiritual adviser of the Boorne brothers, who had been put in jail, in 1819, for the murder of their brother-in-law, Russell Colvin, who had been lost sight of during six years. Fearing death by hanging, the brothers confessed, and a mass of circumstantial evidence seemed to prove their guilt. Accordingly they were tried and condemned to death. Then Jesse's sentence was committed to life imprisonment by the Legislature, and only a few days before the time for Stephen's execution Coivln turned up to Manchester. Stephen was immediately released and fired the first cannon in celebration thereof. The next Sunday Mr. Haynes preached a sermon on "The Prisoner Released," which was published later, together with his account of the trial. The book was written in narrative style, and the air of mystery was well maintained. It was a popular work and of literary merit.[8]

In 1822 Mr. Haynes became the Congregational minister at Granville, New York, and there remained during the last eleven years of his life, leaving only for brief preaching trips or visits to old friends. In 1832 he preached in New York City, as also in Albany and Troy. In the following year he was listened to by a crowded church in Granville, Massachusetts, the town where he had spent his youthful days. He was now eighty years old and soon fell seriously sick. His labors necessarily terminated, and the Rutland Consociation of Churches saw to it that he was properly cared for. His death occurred on September 28, 1833, and on learning of it that body adopted a resolution mentioning his connection with it from its inception, his long and useful service in the cause of religion, and stating that they affectionately cherished his memory and recorded in their minutes this tribute of their respect. The wife of Richard

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[8]Cooley, *op. cit.*, 209–211; Lemuel Haynes, *Mystery Developed;* Hosea Beckley, *Hist. of Vermont*, 286.

Skinner, a governor and chief justice of Vermont, wrote of Mr. Haynes that "he ever held the station of a man without a blemish—never offering to repine that God had not made him without a stain upon his skin." The Rev. Dr. Swift had told her that "in all their ecclesiastical meetings Mr. Haynes was first noticed and in such a manner that every disagreeable feeling arising from the peculiarity of the situation should be done away with."[9]

Mr. Haynes was a self-made preacher and had risen to the foremost place among his brethren of the cloth in Vermont. He was shrewd, frank, direct, and vigorous. He was freer than most white preachers to tell his audience what he thought, and, being frontier people, they were gratified by it. He identified himself with the upper and conservative part of the community, and everywhere he went in the State he was recognized as a man of prominance. Furthermore, he was a writer of sermons and books which passed through edition after edition and greatly added to his reputation.[10]

In physical traits he was distinctly African, but he possessed a "comeliness" of person and manner, a dignity of bearing, a mobility of countenance, and a ready wit which won him general favor. These qualities explain for us how it was, as the *Colored American* of March 11, 1837, said, that he was "the only man of *known* African descent who has ever succeeded in overpowering the system of American caste." He did not concern himself about his negro origin, or to aid others of his race, or to take up the slavery question, now so insistent as to have started the formation of anti-slavery societies in Vermont, the first only five months before his death. He devoted his attention almost exclusively to the cause of religion, although, as Mr. Tuttle has pointed out in his admirable study of "Vermont and the Antislavery Movement," he had among his intimate friends Richard Skinner, one of Vermont's strongest anti-slavery governors, Joseph Burr, who bequeathed the

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[9]Cooley, *op. cit.*, 253, 261, 311–312, 214; Walter Hill Crockett, *Vermont the Green Mountain State*, III, 146.

[10]Loggins, *op. cit.*, 122.

American Colonization Society five thousand dollars; and Stephen Bradley, who introduced the bill in the Senate which abolished the slave trade to the United States." In preaching for more than thirty years to the generation of Vermonters, which was to promote the cause of abolition and do their share of the work of the Underground Railroad, he must have impressed them with the example of what a man with negro blood in his veins might become.[11]

Mr. Tuttle also speaks of a negro boy who lived at Thetford, Vermont, during part of his boyhood and rose to distinction. He was sent to Boston to be educated, so tradition says, at the expense of Thetford citizens. There he taught a colored school and became a friend of William Ellery Channing. After going to England, where he moved in the highest circles, he obtained a position in Haiti through the influence of Wilberforce and became at length one of the confidential advisors to the Emperor Christophe. In 1818 he published his *Haytian Papers* and returned to the United States after losing the emperor's confidence. He returned to Haiti at Christophe's death and was attorney general at the time of his own death in 1839.[12] The career of this negro, Prince Saunders was another example known to Vermonters in the time of the anti-slavery agitation of a negro who achieved distinction.

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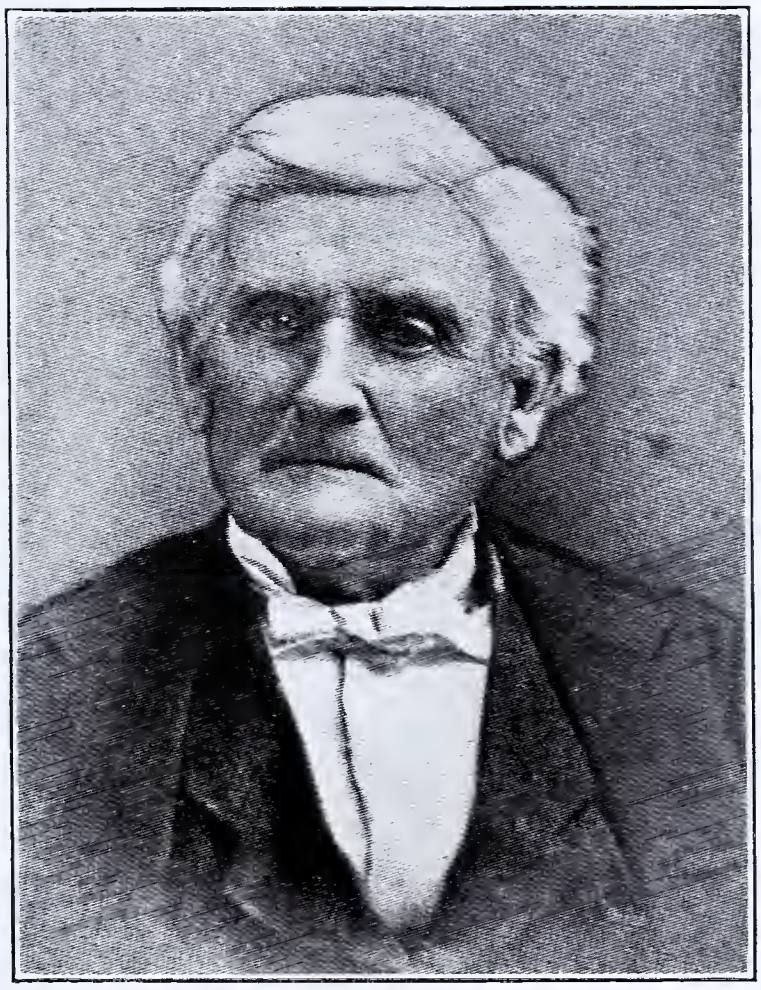
[11]Tuttle, "Vermont and the Antislavery Movement," (not published), 27–28.

[12]Dict. of Am. Biog., XVI, 382.



Rev. John Kendrick Converse, of Burlington, Secretary of the Vermont Colonization Society, and an Underground Railroad operator.

III

VERMONT'S SHARE IN THE COLONIZATION MOVEMENT

It is symptomatic of Vermont's concern for the freeing of the slaves that she early became inoculated with the ineffective virus of colonization. The inoculation took place in 1819 when a group of men founded the first State Colonization Society in America in the State House at Montpelier. The objects of the colonization movement were to remove all negroes, free and enslaved, from the United States to Liberia, introduce civilization into Africa, and eradicate the slave trade.[1] Gradually, however, the colonizationists came to stress the removal of the free blacks, which aggravated the abolitionists more than ever. In 1827 three men who were governors of Vermont at one time or another and three who were United States senators were on the roll of the society's officers, which included seven clergymen. For the next thirty years ministers constituted nearly half of the officers of the society. A great majority of the colonization groups were organized in local churches, such as the Baptist Society of East Bethel, the Congregational Society of Montpelier, and the Methodist Society at Pittsford,[2] which contributed for a while to the society's treasury; but the Grand Lodge gave thirty dollars in 1827 to constitute its chaplain, the Rev. Simeon Parmalee, a life member of the American Colonization Society and the Young Ladies Charitable Society of Royalton contributed fifteen dollars for a life membership for the Rev. Azel Washburn.[3]

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[1]Chas. E. Tuttle, Jr., "Vermont and the Antislavery Movement" (typed MS.), contains an excellent chapter on "The Vermont Colonization Society;" *Report*, Vt. Colonization Soc., 1853, p. 5; *ibid.*, 1827, p. 11; *ibid.*, 1830, p. 6; Ralph Randolph Gurley, *Life of Jehudi Ashmun*, 23–26; *Report*, Vt. Colonization Soc., 1857, p. 6; *Report*, *ibid.*, 1830, p. 2.

[2]*Report*, Vt. Colonization Soc., 1827, pp. 9–10.

[3]*Ibid.*, pp. 8–10.

Jehudi Ashmun, who was prominent in the national organization, had attended Middlebury College and the University of Vermont, and while at the latter decided to labor in Africa for the good of its natives. He became the first colonial agent of the national society, took seriously ill in the Dark Continent, and died at the age of thirty-five after his return home. His death was the occasion of a memorial of appreciation which appeared in the *Report* of the Vermont Colonization Society for 1828.[4]

Depending for some time upon voluntary contributions for its support, the Vermont society sought to enlist the churches to collect free-will offerings once a year, and its *Report* of 1830 shows contributions totaling one thousand dollars received from one hundred and twelve congregations. Each year thereafter about the same amount was sent to the national society. The State society's *Report* for 1828 notes the establishment of an auxiliary at Bennington and another at Manchester and a gift of five thousand dollars to the national society by Joseph Burr of the latter town. Mr. Burr was a parishioner of Mr. Haynes, whom he summoned from Granville to his deathbed in order to receive his consolations until the end came. Richard Skinner, the first president of the Manchester society, was also an intimate friend of the mulatto preacher.[5] When inadequate amounts were realized from voluntary contributions the Vermont society adopted the plan of sending out agents to collect funds, and these agents were usually clergymen. Most of the *Reports* of the State society sought to stimulate the interest of its members and contributors by printing news of the progress of the blacks in Liberia. Considerable space was devoted by semi-religious newspapers, such as *The Vermont Chronicle* at Windsor, to news from Liberia and to excerpts from *The African Repository*. On November 1, 1828, it told of public meetings in London to promote universal emancipation and spoke of England as the birthplace

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[4]*Report*, Vt. Colonization Soc., 1827, p. 11; 1830, pp. 4, 2, 3; Crockett, *Vermont the Green Mountain State*, III, 146; T. M. Cooley, *Sketches of Life and Char. of the Rev. Lemuel Haynes*, 261–262.

[5]*Report*, Vt. Colonization Soc., 1827, p. 11; *ibid*, 1830, pp. 2–4; Cooley, *op. cit.*, 261–262.

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still "of noble thoughts and great designs." Both the colonizationists and abolitionists treated Clarkson, Sharp, and Wilberforce as heroes.[6]

The *Chronicle*, like the abolition newspapers of the State, was concerned to see the Free Soil cause prevail in the Kansas and Nebraska country, whither numbers of Vermonters were emigrating. Thousands of them had gone to Ohio and flourished and many more were moving farther west. By 1850 the population of the North Central States had been increased by about fifty-two thousand five hundred natives from the Green Mountain State, or by seventeen per cent of its population. Emigration into Kansas and Nebraska occurred during the decade 1850–1860. At first the Vermont young men went by themselves or joined the Massachusetts companies, but by 1855 Kansas emigration societies were formed in Vermont and went out to fight for freedom. In 1855 a company went from Montpelier and another from Randolph, in 1856 two from Rutland and in 1857 two more. They were aided by private subscriptions and by an appropriation made by the Legislature.[7]

Much was said of the emancipation in the West Indies as a method marked by the absence of evil results. However, Great Britain's example did not greatly appeal to Vermont, which like her sister States, still cherished the bitterness of the Revolution and the War of 1812.[8] On October 29, 1834, the *Chronicle* gave publicity on its front page to James G. Birney's famous letter, explaining why he could no longer support the cause of colonization, and the editorial comments were favorable in the main, although the *Chronicle* was a colonization newspaper. For five years it was edited by Joseph Tracey, a graduate of Dartmouth and a Congregational minister, who became the secretary of the Massa-

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[6]*Report*, Vt. Colonization Soc., 1830, p. 2; *ibid*, 1846, pp. 10–11; Chas. E. Tuttle, Jr., "Vermont and the Antislavery Movement" (typed MS.), p. 59.

[7]Lewis D. Stilwell, "Migration from Vermont," *Proceedings* of Vt. Hist. Soc., 1937, pp. 215, 224.

[8]Charles E. Tuttle, Jr., "Vermont and Antislavery Movement" (typed MS.), p. 72.

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chusetts Colonization Society in 1836 and so remained until his death in 1874.[9]

The Rev. John Kendrick Converse, pastor of the First Congregational Church in Burlington for twelve years (1832–1844) and in 1854 principal of the Burlington Female Seminary, was secretary of the Vermont Colonization Society and made many lecturing trips through New England to promote the cause of colonization. On October 17, 1832, he preached before the Vermont Colonization Society at Montpelier "A Discourse on the Moral, Legal and Domestic Condition of our Colored Population," which was published at Burlington shortly afterwards. Another one of his addresses given before the same society on October 15, 1849, was entitled "The History of Slavery and the Means of Elevating the African Race."[10]

Inevitably the colonization movement in Vermont was weakened when the antagonistic anti-slavery movement started on its militant way through the Green Mountains in April, 1833. Only three societies were formed in that year, but the next year witnessed the organization of thirteen, including the Vermont Anti-Slavery Society; 1835, of nine; 1836, of twenty-four; and 1837, of nineteen, to limit ourselves to the first five years of the movement,[11] which was marked by the determination of its originator, William Lloyd Garrison, to accomplish immediate emancipation on American soil. The membership of anti-slavery societies in Vermont increased by leaps and bounds. This fact was more than the rival State society liked to admit. Its *Report* for 1841 insisted that "a large portion of the best men" of Vermont was with the society "in their convictions and sympathies," but that such had been "the excitement and sensitiveness of the public mind that many of its real friends, both clergymen and laymen," had "foreborne all associated action for the present through fear of kindling unprofitable

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[9]Chas. E. Tuttle, Jr., "Vermont and Antislavery Movement" (typed MS.); Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, *Weld-Grinke Letters, 1822–1844* (1934), I, 196, n. 4.

[10]Lizzie S. Converse, *In Memoriam of the Rev. John Kendrick Converse* (1881); letter from Theron S. Dean, March 10, 1936; letter from Miss Theodora Agnes Peck, March 25 and 27, 1936.

[11]*Fourth Am. Report*, Am. Anti-Slavery Soc. (1837), p. 125.

strife and from unwillingness to come into direct collision with those of another spirit." However, it deprecated the rivalry between the Anti-Slavery Society and itself, both "aiming professedly, at the welfare of an abused and injured race." The two organizations "ought not to be jealous of each other," stand in each other's way, or denounce each other. "Judah should not vex Ephraim, nor Ephraim Judah."[12] The same *Report* told of the progress in Liberia and was hopeful for the future. Only two hundred and fifty dollars were collected in 1841, and the appendix of the *Report* for that year contained a brief summary of the objections made by the enemies of colonization to its program. These were that the colonization society riveted the chains of the slaves; opposed immediate abolition on the soil; showed two faces, one at the North and another at the South; encouraged prejudice against color; and could never remove the whole colored population. Other arguments against colonization were that the negroes themselves were opposed to it, and that it involved the exploitation and often the annihilation of the race whose land was to be colonized. These charges appeared in the *Report* of the Vermont Anti-Slavery Society for 1835 and in Oliver Johnson's *Address* delivered in the Congregational Church in Middlebury by request of that society on February 18 of the same year.[13]

The colonizationists of Vermont did not ignore these charges and answered them as best they could. They denied opposition on their part to immediate emancipation on the soil, but did not deny that some of their friends thought emancipation should be gradual and accompanied by colonization. If negroes could not appreciate the benefits of migration for themselves it was due to propaganda, but an increasing number of them were being convinced. The total colored population could be transported, as shown by the United States shipping statistics, if adequate funds were forthcoming. The prejudice against color already existed among whites towards blacks and even among the latter towards each other. This could only be avoided by

[12] *Report*, Vt. Colonization Soc., 1841, p. 6.

[13] *Vide Report*, pp. 13, 15–16 and *Address*, pp. 21–22.

settling the blacks together and affording them the opportunity to prove their own worth. The Colonization Society was not two-faced or bad merely because some Southerners supported it. Some Southern slaveholders considered slavery divine and hated both colonizationists and abolitionists. Others regarded slavery as an evil. The society mailed identical official publications both South and North. Liberia, it was claimed, was rapidly becoming a modern republic, with the advantages of civilization, and was "serving as a welcome beacon to the benighted natives of the dark continent."[14]

No doubt more strenuous efforts were put forth by the Vermont Colonization Society to increase its annual collections. At any rate, in 1846, the sum garnered amounted to seven hundred and fifty dollars.[15] Two years later the colonizationists were deploring their lack of progress by saying that they should be guilty of ingratitude to God and of wrong to their fellow men if they slumbered on through the next year as they had through the past.[16] However, they prided themselves on being the first State society, made much of the independence of Liberia, and told how President Roberts of the Liberian Republic had helped to burn the barracoons of slave traders, free hundreds of slaves, and take possession of the region infested by them. They even sought to utilize the economic motive by mentioning that cotton grew as spontaneously and luxuriantly in Liberia "as Canadian thistles in Vermont."[17]

If the Compromise of 1850 stimulated the abolitionists to greater activity, as it certainly did, it brought home more strongly than ever to the colonizationists the dangers and difficulties of free negroes, both North and South. The radical anti-slavery agitation had been in progress for eight years and the answer to it was the drastic Compromise of 1850. The colonizationists might have felt that, under the circumstances, theirs was the practical alternative for

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[14]*Report*, Vt. Colonization Soc., 1846, app.; *ibid.*, 1856, pp. 10, 15–16.

[15]*Report*, Vt. Colonization Soc., 1846, p. 8.

[16]*Ibid.*, 1848, p. 17.

[17]*Report*, Vt. Colonization Soc., 1850, pp. 5, 11.

solving the negro question, both slave and free. The *Reports* of the Vermont Colonization Society of various years in the decade of the 50's spoke of the formation of new State societies, the voting of sums of a few thousand dollars by the Legislatures of Kentucky and Missouri for the colonization of free negroes, and of the Vermont society's success in securing a grant of State Library books from the Legislature for the Public Library of Liberia. It was gaining friends all over the State, and its annual collections were now averaging more than two thousand dollars. But the total number of negroes sent from the United States to Liberia between 1830 and 1852 was disheartening to any earnest colonizationist. That total was only seventy-five hundred and ninety-two, of whom the South sent sixty-nine hundred and seventy-two, twenty-four hundred of these being from Virginia. The remaining four hundred and fifty-seven were sent by the North. The *Report* of 1857 summed up its work by saying that the society had furnished between four hundred and five hundred volumes to the schools and the Public Library in Monrovia, had contributed as nearly as could be ascertained thirty-one thousand dollars, had paid the expenses of six hundred emigrants to Liberia, and had aided in the purchase of territory.[18] It is clear that the Vermont society was very much mistaken in its figures about the number of negroes transported by the money it had contributed for that purpose unless the last five years had witnessed much greater activity than the previous twelve. In 1859 the president of the Vermont Colonization Society was the Rev. John Wheeler; the secretary, the Rev. John K. Converse, and there were three other ministers on the board of managers."[19]

Among the colonizationists of Vermont was the Right Rev. John Henry Hopkins who came to Burlington as the first Protestant Episcopal bishop of Vermont in 1832 and became one of the most prominent Northern defenders of slavery as a Christian institution. He never denied that

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[18]*Report*, Vt. Colonization Soc., 1856, pp. 12–13; Edward Ingle, *Southern Sidelights*, 296, n. 2; *Report*, Vt. Colonization Soc., 1857, p. 7; *ibid.*, 1856, p. 6; 1857, p. 6; *ibid.*, 1859, p. 5.

[19]*Idid.*, p. 5.

slavery was an evil, and having lived in Vermont for more than thirty years, he claimed that "all his habits, sympathies, and associations were opposed to slavery, and in favor of abolition." But he favored permitting the South to deal with slavery unless the North would undertake some scheme of gradual emancipation, with compensation and the removal of the freed negroes to Africa.[20]

In 1857 Bishop Hopkins published his *American Citizen*, in which slavery was considered an evil, but necessary, from the Christian's point of view. Slavery was sanctioned by the Bible, than which there was no higher law. Slaves were held by the early church fathers in Europe, and negroes in slavery in this country were better off than their free brethren, who lacked security and enjoyed less sympathy under a wage system. Slaves were rescued from the cruel barbarity of African despots and the colonization of Liberia was a noble experiment. American citizens must understand that Southerners were only demanding their rights under the Constitution, which recognized slavery. No Northerner should advocate anti-slavery action contrary to the Constitution and the Bible, and no Southerner should resort to unlawful measures against abolitionists.[21]

Bishop Hopkins followed this exposition of his views by other arguments through the columns of New York newspapers and, in 1861, by those presented in his *Bible View of Slavery*. In the latter he did not hesitate to characterize the doctrine set forth in the Declaration of Independence that all men are created free and equal as "sheer absurdity" and no reason for condemning slavery. The Declaration formed no part of the organic law of the country, and the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was eliminated by slavery. The kind of servitude which Bishop Hopkins had in mind was not commensurate with the facts, for he insisted that slavery was neither cruel nor immoral, because it extended no further than requiring the physical labor of the slaves. Of course, slave families were often separated, but white men left their families for the

[20]Hopkins, *Bible View of Slavery* (1864), p. 51.
[21]Hopkins, *American Citizen*, 51, 121–137.

gold fields and soldiers and sailors were necessarily separated from theirs.[22]

In the year in which the *Bible View of Slavery* was published Leonard Marsh issued his scathing reply to it at Burlington. Mr. Marsh characterized Bishop Hopkins as a leader in a Church possessing "the most shamelessly pro-slavery clergy on the face of the earth." He did not rate him above the majority of the members of his Church in hidebound conservatism.

Bishop Hopkins doubtless thought of the ultra abolitionist as defending the "popular dogma of human equality." Was not that doctrine intended "to set the servant against his master, the poor against the rich, the weak against the strong, the ignorant against the well educated?" Bishop Hopkins had some claim to being a humanitarian, for he always spoke well of colonization and proposed a rather fantastic scheme for removing the negroes to Africa and establishing a belt of black republics under governmental supervision. As set forth by Bishop Hopkins in his *American Citizen* this scheme called for the expenditure of a billion dollars derived from the sale of public lands, the purchase of forty thousand slaves a year from their owners, and their transportation to Liberia; the whole project to be completed in about twenty-five years.[23]

Mr. Marsh took pains to answer Bishop Hopkins' arguments one after another and pointed out that the Declaration of Independence meant equality before the law, mentioned that the Old Testament not only condoned slavery but also polygamy, that the institution was contrary to the spirit of Christianity, and that slaves could not lead happy lives under the constant oppression to which they were subjected by all sorts of legal restrictions.[24]

Even after President Lincoln had issued his Emancipation Proclamation, Bishop Hopkins clung to his views about

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[22]Hopkins, *Bible View of Slavery*, 23.

[23]Review of a *"Letter from" . . . Hopkins*, p. 7; Hopkins, *American Citizen*, pp. 150–161.

[24]Review of a *"Letter from the Right Rev. John H. Hopkins, D.D., LL. D., Bishop of Vermont, on the Bible View of Slavery,"* by a Vermonter.

slavery, publishing his *Scriptural, Ecclesiastical, and Historical View of Slavery from the Days of the Patriarch Abraham to the Nineteenth Century* in 1864. He was one of the "die-hards" among the colonizationists.

The State society itself continued to issue its *Annual Reports* until 1868, showing a persistence which kept it active for eight years longer than the Vermont Anti-Slavery Society. However, the abolitionists greatly surpassed their rivals in legislative, polemical, political, and Underground activities, all of which must be taken into account to get the complete story of Vermont's antagonism to slavery.

It is well known that Vermont began her statehood with a constitution prohibiting slavery. Her first governor was Thoms Chittenden, who was a leading member of the convention which framed that instrument. In 1820 her Legislature adopted a report and set of resolutions opposing the admission of Missouri into the Union, because slavery was incompatible with the principles of free governments. Isaac Tichenor was a senator from Vermont at the time and presented his State's views in the Senate. When the abolition agitation began, Vermont had no occasion to change her policy. William Slade was her most acute defender of freedom in the national House of Representatives from 1831 to 1843 and stirred the Southern members to fury in the session of 1836–1837 by his repeated denunciations of slavery and could only be checked by gag rule. As governor from 1844 to 1846 Slade was uncompromising in his opposition to the annexation of Texas. Samuel Chandler Crafts belonged to the coterie of unquenchable abolitionists in Washington during his brief term in the Senate in 1842–1843. His senior colleague was Samuel Shethar Phelps, senator from 1839 to 1851 and again in 1853–1854. From within the committee Phelps resisted the Compromise of 1850 and defended the Vermont anti-slavery resolutions in a speech which attracted much attention.[25] Many other leaders of the cause were furnished by the little Green Mountain State.

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[23]Drake, *Disct. of Am. Biog.*, 183, 909, 833, 226, 712.

IV

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON, AND ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETIES IN VERMONT

It is safe to say that there was no better soil in the United States for the anti-slavery movement to take root and develop in than that of Vermont. As a select committee of the State Senate said in 1855, Vermont was "born of a resistance to arbitrary power, her first breath was that of freedom, her first voice a declaration of the equal rights of man. How then could her people be "otherwise than haters of slavery . . . ?" Furthermore, there were no conditions in Vermont, as there were in the New England States on the coast, to weaken the sentiments of her people on the subject of human bondage. They had practically no commercial dealings with the South, almost no social intercourse with that section, and no shipping interests to profit by the slave trade.[1]

This does not mean that she had no pro-slavery men at all. In Montpelier, Randolph, and a few other communities there were enough of these persons to break up anti-slavery meetings in 1835, and slave hunters could find an occasional low fellow in certain localities to aid them in the attempt to capture a runaway slave. But the local anti-slavery element was in such majority and so alert and the Courts so supported by public opinion and by law that their attempts were, one may say, invariably thwarted.

William Lloyd Garrison once wrote that abolitionism was indigenous to the soil of Vermont. In 1828 and until March, 1829, when he returned to Boston, he lived in Bennington and there edited *The Spirit of the Times*. This paper was primarily a campaign organ for the election of John Quincy Adams to the presidency against Andrew Jackson, but Garrison found occasion to refer in its columns to his devotion to the cause of emancipation, which he said was one of the great objects of his life. He also said, "We are resolved to agitate this subject to the utmost," and he

[1]*New England Quarterly*, April, 1929, p. 234.

began by circulating a petition to Congress for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Without difficulty he procured the signatures of twenty-three hundred and fifty-two citizens of Vermont to his petition, which he thought was the largest one on the subject presented to Congress up to that time, "when the people of other States were slumbering in the arms of endeavor." The petition was presented to the House on January 26, 1829.[2]

If Garrison had remained in Vermont there can be little doubt that he would have continued his labors there in behalf of the slave, and that anti-slavery societies would have begun to spring up among its people. As it was the movement in Vermont did not get under way until April, 1833, when the first society was formed at Jamaica. This was followed in July by one at Cornwall with eight members, this number being increased by 1837 to one hundred and sixty-seven. In August a society was organized at Peacham, making a total of only three anti-slavery societies formed in the Green Mountain State during the year 1833. During the next year progress was much more rapid, the number of societies formed being fourteen. One of these was at Ferrisburgh and started with sixty-seven members. Four years later it had two hundred and five, its secretary being Rowland T. Robinson, a Quaker who was a generous friend of fugitive slaves passing through Ferrisburgh on their way to Canada. Since the townsmen of that place were largely members of the Society of Friends, fugitives had no difficulty in finding shelter, food, and conveyance farther north. Other societies of the year had by 1837 larger memberships than the one at Ferrisburgh. For example, that at Cabot had three hundred members and that at Starkboro and Lincoln four hundred and eighty-five. The latter issued an *Address* to the public on November 8, 1834, which was published at Middlebury in 1835. The number of societies organized during 1835 dropped to nine, of which three were at places where runaway slaves were cared for. These places were Bennington, which had a society of one hundred and forty members in

[2]*Second Annual Report*, Vt. Anti-Slavery Soc., p. 13; Edward Day Collins, *Hist. of Vermont*, 235; W. P. Garrison and W. J. Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison*, I, 110.

1837; Montpelier, where the membership was one hundred; and Johnson, the size of whose society is not recorded.

On May 1, 1834, the Vermont Anti-Slavery Society was formed as an auxiliary to the American Anti-Slavery Society, being, according to Garrison, the first State body of the kind "regularly organized in this country, for the immediate extirpation of American slavery."[3] Its president was Asa O. Aldis, of St. Albans, the chairman of its executive committee was Rowland T. Robinson, of Ferrisburgh, and the clerk of this committee was Oliver Johnson, of Middlebury. It was founded by a hundred delegates from thirty different towns and had the staunch support of such prominent men as Lawrence Brainerd, Samuel C. Crafts, Rodney V. Marsh, Colonel Jonathan P. Miller, Joseph Poland, and others.

The society began its platform work by inviting the Rev. Samuel J. May, of Brooklyn, Connecticut, to lecture in the State. He was the agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, a warm friend of Mr. Garrison, and the first Unitarian minister who took an open stand against slavery. He was treated with violence in Vermont before he came to Montpelier and was mobbed five times in the State.

The Legislature gave its permission to the Anti-Slavery Society for Mr. May to lecture in the Representatives' Hall in Montpelier on the evening of October 22, 1835. There was a good sized audience present of both ladies and gentlemen, but rowdies outside threw stones and eggs through the window where the speaker stood. The county sheriff, who was in the audience, was called upon by Chauncey L. Knapp, the editor of *The State Journal*, to arrest the disturbers of the meeting but took no steps to do so, and the meeting broke up. Mr. May would probably have been assaulted by the rabble when he left the building had it not been for a Quaker lady, who took his arm and accompanied him through the turbulent crowd. Similar outbreaks were experienced at Randolph and other places.[4]

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[3] *Second Report*, Vt. Anti-Slavery Soc., 13.

[4] *Second Report*, Vt. Anti-Slavery Soc., 19; Rowland E. Robinson, *Vermont*, 335; *New England Quarterly*, Apr., 1929, p. 234. *See* Samuel J. May, *Some Recollections of Our Anti-Slavery Conflict*, 153–155, and the *Liberator*, V, No. 174, for additional accounts of the affair.

Some of the citizens requested Mr. May to speak again the next evening from the pulpit of the Congregational Church, which was the "Old Brick Church" fronting on Main Street. He accepted the invitation and next day received a communication from seven men, who claimed that they had been asked by "a large number of the inhabitants of the town" and "many members of the Legislature to inform him" that by leaving town without any further attempt to hold forth on the absurd doctrine of anti-slavery, he would confer a favor and "save them from the trouble of using any other means to that effect." Placards were also posted warning "the people generally, and ladies in particular," not to attend the anti-slavery meeting proposed to be held that evening, as the person who was advertised to speak would certainly be prevented "by violence if necessary." Those who moderately opposed the meeting counseled both against resort to force and attendance and planned a rival meeting to be held in the State House at the same hour.

Just before the hour appointed Mr. May went to the church and took his seat on the platform. When he began his lecture, Captain Timothy Hubbard arose and ordered him to desist, being supported by a crowd of pro-slavery men. Mr. May called upon any one of their number to step forward and give reasons why their fellow-citizens should not be permitted to hear the lecture he had been invited to deliver. He further said that if he could not show these reasons to be false he would yield to their demand, but for the sake of liberty of speech he would proceed if he could. On his attempting to go on, the air was filled with cries of "Down with him," "Throw him over," "Choke him." The ladies were asked to retire and it looked as though the opposition could not be thwarted. C. L. Knapp remonstrated, appealing to the pro-slavery men not to disgrace themselves, the town, and the State. When Mr. May attempted a third time to proceed, the rioters rushed for the pulpit, but were suddenly halted by Colonel Jonathan Peckham Miller, who cried "in a voice of thunder," "Mr. Hubbard, if you do not stop this outrage now I will knock you down!" While this stayed the movement towards the pulpit, it did not allay the disorder and the audience dispersed.

Messrs. Miller, Knapp, and a few others tried to persuade Mr. May to stay over the following day and make another attempt, promising to take measures that would prevent another outbreak, but he could not remain on account of other engagements.

Mr. Knapp printed a full account of the affair in the next issue of *The State Journal*, denouncing it as an outrage and saying that the 22nd and 23rd days of October, 1835, would be long remembered "as a time when justice and law were trailed in the dust.[5] The incident received notice also in many other quarters. *The Vermont Watchman and State Gazette* told briefly of the disturbance of the first meeting by the throwing of missiles, of the posting of notices for the second meeting, as also of bills urging the friends of Colonization not to attend it or resort to force, and of the arrangement made for a meeting of the colonizationists at the same hour in the State House. Nevertheless, the exercises began in the meeting-house before a large audience. A citizen remonstrated against proceeding further and was cheered by men in different parts of the house. When Mr. May attempted to go on, he was greeted with hisses, shouts, and the stamping of feet and could not be heard. The ladies were requested to retire and the assembly dispersed. The *Watchman*, while admitting its own opposition to the Anti-Slavery Society and its belief that the movement was endangering the peace of the whole country, declared its disapproval of measures "to put down discussion by force." Such a course was neither expedient nor right, and it apprehended that persecution would create sympathy and make abolitionists.

The Vermont Patriot and State Gazette was stirred by the article in *The State Journal* to indulge in invectives and innuendoes. It held in "contempt and abhorrence the incendiary and chimerical schemes of all *meddlers*, *disunionists*, *nullifiers* and *abolitionists*" and would not have chronicled the transaction but for "*the exaggerated*, *ridiculous*, *quixotic* and *false* account manufactured by Knapp, or some of his sable compeers, and published in that vehicle of *fanataticism*,

[5]*Green Mountain Freeman*, July 11, 1877.

sedition and *treason*, the *State Journal.*" The *Patriot* then gave a very mild account of the riotous meeting.[6] The Democratic *Sentinel* at Burlington attempted to justify the attack on Mr. May.

A few days later the Rev. Alvah Sabin of the town of Georgia introduced in the Assembly a resolution expressing "the utmost abhorrence" for the conduct of those men who signed the note warning Mr. May to leave Montpelier and of those "who participated in the riotous proceedings." However, this resolution was promptly "laid upon the table" and was characterized by the *Patriot* as an illegitimate attempt to give undue notice to those proceedings for political purposes.[7]

In May, 1835, the Vermont society had sent two delegates to the meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York. This society had adopted an enlarged program of operations, which called for increased funds, and the two delegates from Vermont had pledged $200 to be paid during the following year, believing that their act would be ratified by their society and hoping that much more could be contributed. During about five months of this year the society had an agent in the field, who circulated anti-slavery publications, lectured in a few towns, and collected subscriptions amounting to $400. Its *Report* for 1835 gave generous credit to *The State Journal*, *The Middlebury Free Press*, and *The North Star* for giving a hearing to the anti-slavery cause in their columns. It also announced enthusiastically the emancipation, "in a moment," of eight hundred thousand slaves in the West Indies on August 1, 1834, exclaiming, "Glorious moment! What a fountain of misery was instantly dried up! What a fountain of joy burst forth! That man is not to be envied whose soul is not filled with delight at the thought." The same *Report* spoke of the coming of Charles Stuart and George Thompson from England to aid the anti-slavery cause after participating in the struggle for emancipation at home. As Mr. Thompson

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[6] *Vermont Watchman and State Gazette*, Oct. 27, 1835.

[7] *Green Mountain Freeman, op. cit.*

was expected to visit Vermont in the Spring of 1836, the *Report* asked who would "not receive him with open arms?"[8]

At the beginning of 1836 the society printed a thousand copies of its *First Annual Report* and twelve hundred of the address delivered at its first annual meeting. Most of these were promptly distributed. The *Report* did not hesitate to point out what the abolitionists considered the drawbacks in the colonizationists' philanthropic program and to depict Jehudi Ashmun, who had sacrificed his life in their cause, as a villainous person who had slain innocent negroes in Africa.[9]

Oliver Johnson, secretary of the Addison County Anti-Slavery Society and of the Middlebury Anti-Slavery Society, as well as clerk of the executive committee of the State society, was familiar with the objections urged against abolition, such as that the slaves were disqualified for freedom by their ignorance, that they were better off in bondage than if emancipated at once, that emancipation might set off an insurrection, that the free States should mind their own business, and that abolitionists were infringing upon the Constitutional rights of the slave owners and endangering the Union.[10]

Mr. Johnson answered these objections to his own satisfaction, and more or less to that of his fellow-abolitionists in the State, as follows: Let the Union die if it must be reconciled to the sin of slavery in order to live, but the abolitionists could do the one thing to save its life by extirpating the cancer of slavery. Touching upon the question of the constitutional rights of the slaveholders, Mr. Johnson declared that there was a higher law than the Constitution, thus anticipating Seward's enunciation of that doctrine by fifteen years. It was the higher law by which abolitionists commonly justified their clandestine or public aid to fugitive slaves. In so far as the people of the free

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[8]*Second Report*, Vt. Anti-Slavery Soc., 19; *Report*, *ibid.*, 1835, pp. 9, 10.

[9]*Report*, Vt. Anti-Slavery Soc., 1835, pp. 8–9, 13, 15–16.

[10]Johnson's *Address* delivered in the Congregational Church in Middlebury, . . . Feb. 18, 1835, pp. 6–7, 9; Edward D. Barber, *Address* before the Addison Co. Anti-Slavery Soc., Jul. 4, 1836, p. 14.

States tolerated the sin of slavery they must share in the guilt of it. Attempting to avoid a negro insurrection by condoning slavery was avoiding physical instead of moral evil, but history proved that peace followed emancipation. Any change would be an improvement in the condition of the slaves, and the abolitionists would give it the right direction. If ignorance was a justification for slavery many a white man was in danger of losing his liberty. How much knowledge should one have to be free, and what instruction were the Southerners imparting to their slaves?[11] Mr. Johnson was not disposed to close the paths of preferment, wealth, and intelligence to negroes any more than to white persons and maintained that it was a violation of the law of love to make the color of the skin of the former a pretext for excluding them from these privileges.[12]

The society began its second annual meeting on February 16, 1836, in the town room at Middlebury, with the Rev. John Ide, the new president, in the chair. Letters were read from six gentlemen, including William Lloyd Garrison, James G. Birney, and the Hon. William Jay. The annual report of the board of managers was read and ordered printed, and a number of resolutions were adopted, which may be given here as being representative of the sentiments of the society: (1) American slavery is a sin, which should be opposed uncompromisingly by the Christian, the philanthropist, and the republican; (2) for the people to sanction, even by their silence, the existence of slavery is to acquiesce in the subversion of the fundamental principles of all freedom; (3) slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia is a "plague-spot" on the face of government and should be removed by the exercise of the constitutional powers of Congress; (4) the only sure means of overthrowing slavery is by free discussion and the operation of public sentiment on the consciences of the nation; (5) the admission by distinguished advocates of slavery that the Southern people do not fear slave insurrections by the dissemination of anti-slavery publications but do fear their effect upon

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[11]Johnson's *Address*, *op. cit.*, 67, 8, 10–12, 17–19.

[12]*Ibid*, p. 5.

the consciences of the slaveholders, is convincing proof of the efficiency of our measures; (6) we consider the many recent attempts to stifle free discussion by mobs as alarming evidence of the decline of public morals, patriotism, and liberty; (7) we will uphold free discussion of public evils and public and private rights; (8) while condemning slavery, we do not design to provoke the resentment of the South against the North, but to ensure repentance and save the oppressor and the oppressed from the evils their relation never fails to bring upon them; (9) we believe that emancipation would not endanger the persons or the property of the whites; that the freed blacks, if properly treated and instructed, would become orderly and industrious; and that the planters would be enriched by employing them as laborers; (10) we regard the doctrines of the American Colonization Society as tending to obstruct emancipation and think Gerrit Smith's example in withdrawing from that society worthy of imitation by opponents of slavery; (11) we admire the fortitude and philanthropy of James G. Birney in favoring immediate emancipation and commend his paper, the *Philanthropist*, to the friends of human rights; (12) we deem George Thompson and Charles Stuart not as "foreign emissaries" but as messengers of truth to a guilty people and the persecution of the former a disgrace to our country; (13) we can never forget the lofty and fearless spirit of the calumniated and heroic William Lloyd Garrison.[13] A subsequent resolution endorsed the decision of Judge Harrington, once made in the Town Hall where the society was meeting, that a bill of sale from the Almighty was necessary to prove property in man.

The afternoon session of the society was held in the Congregational Meeting-house and was addressed by the Rev. Beriah Green. It was then voted to make a vigorous effort to raise $2,000 during 1836 for the support of the abolition cause. A subscription list was at once started, which, with the collection taken in the evening, amounted to $675.14. The executive committee was authorized to employ one or more lecturers and to send out a circular to the friends of the cause throughout the State soliciting contributions.

[13]*Second Annual Report*, Vt. Anti-Slavery Soc., 4–5.

Depositories were established at Middlebury, Montpelier, Brandon, and Vergennes where anti-slavery books and papers might be obtained.[14]

The objects of the Vermont Anti-Slavery Society were to abolish slavery in the United States and to improve the mental, moral, and political condition of the colored population. However, the society would discountenance physical interference with slavery by the free States or the Federal Government. It would not attempt to excite insurrection among the slaves, but would seek to overthrow the institution by exposing the guilt and danger of holding men as property, by rebuking sin and calling for its immediate relinquishment, by appealing to the understanding and conscience, by employing the power of the pulpit and the press, by petitioning Congress to use its constitutional authority to suspend the American slave trade and abolish slavery in the Territories, by presenting considerations of interest, safety, and economy to the people of the slave States, by exhorting those of the free States, who shared in the sin of the South, to use all lawful and peaceable means to remove the common evil, and by inviting all to join in expressing peaceable and effectual sentiments for its extermination.

Any person who approved of the above principles and contributed to the funds of the society might be a member and vote at its meetings. Besides the usual officers, the society had a board of managers consisting of them and at least ten other members to be annually elected, five constituting a quorum. This board chose every year an executive committee of not less than three or more than seven members, which adopted its own by-laws, filled vacancies in its own body, employed agents and fixed their compensation, as well as that of the corresponding secretary, directed the treasurer in the expenditure of the society's money, appointed an auditor of accounts, arranged for all meetings, presented an annual written report of its doings, as also of income and expenditures, and was expected to adopt the most energetic measures to advance the objects of the society. As the individuals belonging to the society were members of various

[14] *Second Annual Report*, Vt. Anti-Slavery Soc., 6.

denominations, its proceedings were to be so conducted as not to interfere with the religious views of any of them.[15]

The year 1836 witnessed much activity in the organization of anti-slavery societies in Vermont, twenty-three being formed. Three of these were in centers where fugitive slaves enjoyed Underground Railroad facilities, these centers being Brandon, Georgia, and Hardwick. In 1837 the membership of these three societies respectively was seventy-eight, three hundred, and fifty-seven. On July 4, 1836, Mr. E. D. Barber delivered an oration before the Addison County Anti-Slavery Society at Middlebury.

In 1837 fewer societies appeared, namely, seventeen, and four of them were in localities which maintained stations of the Underground. One of these was Cambridge, whose society had two hundred members; the second was Montgomery, the third was St. Johnsbury, and the fourth was St. Albans, but we do not know the membership of the societies at these places.

The total number of anti-slavery societies in Vermont in 1837 was eighty-nine, including the State society and those of Addison, Caledonia, Franklin, Orleans, Washington, and Windham counties. We know the number of members of only forty-six of the eighty-nine in the year mentioned, the total being fifty-eight hundred and ninety-seven. At a low estimate the remaining societies together might have had two thousand members, not including the groups of abolitionists in communities where no societies existed.[16]

The *Report* of the State society for 1838 asked: What confidence could be placed in the integrity of men who, while they were horror-stricken at the encroachment upon chartered privileges and soulless corporations, felt no dismay when the privileges vested in man by the character of his existence conferred by the Almighty himself were wrested from millions by violence and fraud. Of the nearly two score of officers which the State society had at this time only one, so far as specified, was a clergyman. That one was the Rev. H. F. Leavitt, the president of the organization.

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[15] *Second Annual Report*, Vt. Anti-Slavery Soc., 36.

[16] For the list of anti-slavery societies in Vermont, see *Fourth Annual Report*, American Anti-Slavery Soc., New York, 1837.

None of its contributions came from congregations, but they came from the local anti-slavery societies and from individuals. Despite this lack of support on the part of the churches the society's *Report* for 1838 asserted that many of them of different denominations had "spoken out fearlessly" upon the subject of slavery "in the language of abolitionists" and had sent their testimony to the slaveholders. Nevertheless, the *Report* maintained that the pulpit, evidently speaking generally, was "either clamorous against the cause of the slave, or silently submissive to the claims of the master," or uttered "its rebukes and remonstrances in such weak and hurried accents" that it seemed to fear lest they should be heard, either by the oppressor or oppressed."[17]

Speaking before the Vermont Anti-Slavery Society in Middlebury in 1838, Oliver Johnson complained that the pulpit was closed against the abolitionists, whose aims were consequently misunderstood.

During the next twenty-two years the State society continued to flourish and publish its *Annual Reports*. Then came the break in the Union, which the agitation of the abolitionists and their labors on the Underground Railroad had done much to bring about. The Compromise of 1850, including its drastic Fugitive Slave Law, had failed to stem the rising tide of disunion, having instead increased it.

The charge that religious denominations were indifferent or antagonistic to the anti-slavery cause evidently did not apply to the Baptists of Vermont. In 1841 they held an anti-slavery convention at Waterbury which published an *Address*. Either this or another convention of theirs adopted a resolution demanding that immediate emancipation be required "as an indispensable condition of continued membership" in any Southern Baptist Church. However, the Congregationalists were too conservative as yet to enlist in the movement and they were still the most powerful denomination in the State.[18]

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[17]*Report*, Vt. Anti-Slavery Soc., 1838, pp. 30–31.

[18]Lewis D. Stilwell, "Migration from Vermont (1776–1860)," in *Proceedings*, Vt. Hist. Soc., 1937, p. 182.

V

ANTI-SLAVERY NEWSPAPERS AND PARTIES IN VERMONT

Practically all the newspapers published in Vermont advocated the anti-slavery cause. Among them may be mentioned *The State Journal*, which was published at Montpelier, the first issue appearing on June 18, 1831, and the last on November 29, 1836, when it was merged with *The Watchman*. Its first editor and publisher was Gamaliel Small, but he was soon succeeded by Messrs. Knapp and Jewett. The paper seems to have been chiefly devoted to the cause of anti-masonry, but it also stood for abolition and is so noted in the *Second Annual Report* of the New England Anti-Slavery Society in 1834.[1]

In 1834 *The Vermont Telegraph* distinguished itself by taking a definite political stand against slavery and met with vigorous opposition from *The Vermont Chronicle*, the organ of the Congregationalists of the State. The editor of the *Telegraph* was Arian T. Ramsey of Brandon, where he kept an Underground station from which he forwarded fugitives to Rowland T. Robinson at Ferrisburgh.[2] On January 1, 1839, Emery A. Allen and Joseph Poland began to publish *The Voice of Freedom* at Montpelier.[3] On November 7 of the same year this paper printed a long argument from *The Pennsylvania Freeman* in favor of a new party to act against slavery by nominating anti-slavery candidates. The Pennsylvania paper's opinion was that the former policy of anti-slavery people in supporting for public office only men of anti-slavery views had been unsuccessful, while in the New Hampshire State election, where a separate ticket had been

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[1]P. 16. See file of the *State Journal*, Vermont State Library, Montpelier.

[2]*New England Quarterly*, Apr., 1929, p. 235; letter from Rowland E. Robinson, Aug. 19, 1896.

[3]Letter from Clarence S. Brigham, director of American Antiquarian Society, Feb. 4, 1836; letter from H. J. Conant, state librarian of Vermont, Jan. 29, 1836, Rowland E. Robinson, *Vermont, a Study of Independence*, 318.

nominated, the anti-slavery party had polled eighteen hundred votes.[4]

During the discussion on this subject, occupying the next few months, *The Voice of Freedom* took an editorial stand against the proposal, evidently on the ground that political campaigns would prove detrimental to the high moral purposes of the party. Many might join the movement for the sake of the spoils of office who cared little for the freedom of the slave. But to some the organization of a party held out the prospect of gaining the balance of power between the old parties.[5]

On June 8, 1840, the call for the new or Liberty Party was issued, and ten days later a small group of its supporters met and nominated electors favorable to the choice of James G. Birney for president.[6] The new party polled only three hundred and nineteen votes in the State, due to the fact that *The Voice of Freedom* attacked the Liberty men as unwise, the Whig papers as being tools of the Locofocos, and the Van Buren papers as being tools of the Whigs. In 1842 *The Voice of Freedom* became the organ of the Vermont Anti-Slavery Society.[7] Former Chief Justice Hutchinson, the candidate of the new party for governor in 1841 had polled thirty-nine more than three thousand votes, which was a small percentage of the whole but nearly ten times more than Birney's vote. Thenceforward the anti-slavery vote was to become a powerful factor in State politics.

On January 6, 1844, Joseph Poland began to publish *The Green Mountain Freeman* at Montpelier in the interests of the Liberty Party and continued it until 1849, when he sold it to Jacob Scott and D. P. Thompson. A year later Mr. Thompson became the sole proprietor of the paper and so continued until 1856, when he sold it to S. S. Boyce. The first editor of the *Freeman* was the Rev. J. C. Aspinwall.[8] For several years Mr. Poland served as the chairman of the

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[4] *New England Quarterly, op. cit.*, 237.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, June 8, 1830; *New England Quarterly, op. cit.*, 238.

[7] D. P. Thompson, *Hist. of the Town of Montpelier*, 103.

[8] *Ibid.*, 311–312; M. D. Gilman, *Bibliography of Vermont* (1897), 218.

Liberty Party State Committee, which sent out tracts and lecturers. Among its most effective speakers were four negroes who had been slaves, namely: the Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, the fugitive slaves Lewis and Milton Clarke, and Henry Bibb. One of these men toured eighteen towns and gave twenty-seven addresses during 1844, when the speaking campaign was at its height.[9]

Among the white lecturers employed by the State committee were the Revs. C. C. Briggs, Orren Shipman, and J. Gleed. Mr. Gleed was advised by the committee that his compensation would be at the rate of $400 *per annum* for all the time he might devote to the cause, but that the committee would incur no pecuniary responsibility on his account. These instructions show how the speaking campaign was financed. Mr. Gleed claimed that his year's labor should have brought him $355, whereas his collection in twenty-two towns amounted to only $87.12. He therefore appealed to the committee for $267.88, a part of which he wanted for the redemption of his horse and wagon, for he said the law had taken from him all that it could. Another lecturer collected $283.82 in forty-nine towns between June and December, 1844. Mr. Shipman delivered two addresses in each of thirty-nine towns in June, July, and August, and Mr. Briggs seventy-four addresses in fifty-four towns during April, May, June, and July of the same year.[10]

In January, 1842, and again a year later we catch glimpses through the eyes of Theodore D. Weld of the group of anti-slavery insurgents in Washington, to which belonged Congressmen William Slade and General John Mattocks, and Senator Samuel C. Crafts, all from Vermont. On the night of December 31, 1841, General Mattocks told Weld that he would vote for any anti-slavery measure, no matter how ultra it was—"no abolition is too ultra for me, but," he added, "as to speeches, I never made one in my life." He thought the abolition members were determined to do something that winter, and three or four of them would

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[9]Letter from Jos. Poland, Apr. 7, 1897.

[10]*Green Mountain Freeman*, Jan. 31, 1845; *New England Quarterly*, *op. cit.*, 242–3.

make "vigorous onslaughts upon slavery," but exactly in what connection could not then be settled. The insurgents, Weld discovered, had been thoroughly aroused by the passage of the new gag and were determined to "carry the war in upon the enemy," to shift the plan of campaign, and attack slavery at every point. They proposed to introduce resolves, bills, inquiries, etc., which would "open up the whole field for discussion in a shape which *the* gag or any gag" which Congress might pass could not touch. They would make their speeches at convenient intervals through the winter or the session, dealing with the District of Columbia, the Territory of Florida, the internal slave trade, the constitutional rights of colored citizens, Texas, Haiti, colonization, etc., etc. However, they had so many duties on committees, etc., to perform, and so little leisure for gathering materials that they requested Weld to spend the winter in Washington to aid them, and he remained at least through January and February, 1842.[11]

He was back at the "Abolition House" in Washington again late in December, 1842, by the invitation of the insurgents. All the members of Congress who had boarded there the previous winter were again living there, besides Congressman Slade and Senator Crafts, who was the vice-president of the Vermont Anti-Slavery Society. Mr. Crafts had been a member of Congress from the Green Mountain State from 1817 to 1825, governor from 1829 to 1832, and was now, in 1842 and 1843, serving as United States senator. A few days before Weld's arrival a petition had been presented to Congress, signed by a large number of the most influential citizens of Boston, praying that body "to protect colored marines in the ports of those slave states" from which they were excluded by the laws of those States. Mr. Slade and about a dozen other members stood ready to support the petition. While Slade was a thorough-going abolitionist and a dangerous debater when in the mood, he could not be counted on. It has been said of him that he

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[11]Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., *Weld-Grimké Letters, 1822–1844* (1934), II, 883, 879–880; Gilbert H. Barnes, *The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830–1844* (1933), p. 193.

was eccentric and independent and "would make no promises of co-operation beyond financial contributions."[12]

In 1844 Mr. Slade was occupying the gubernatorial chair in Montpelier and included in his message a radical paragraph about the annexation of Texas. He did not hesitate to say that it would be Vermont's duty to declare "upon the consummation of that threatened measure," "her unalterable determination to have no connection with the new union thus formed without her consent and against her will."[13]

In the election of 1844 the Liberty Party suffered a crushing defeat in Vermont, and for that and other reasons its State committee ceased authorizing lecturers to travel over the State. In January, 1845, it changed its tactics by designating a committee in each county, which was to appoint town committees, and these in turn school-district committees within their respective towns. All these committees were to hold frequent meetings to discuss the slavery question and were to distribute tracts. The office of *The Green Mountain Freeman* printed increasing quantities of tracts, and for months the paper was full of notices of local meetings. Voluntary contributions from the towns paid for the tracts, and library societies were formed to buy anti-slavery books, those particularly recommended by the State committee being *The Anti-Slavery Almanac*, Weld's *Slavery As It Is*, and Jay's *View of the Action of the Federal Government in Behalf of Slavery*.[14]

Despite these measures the Liberty Party remained small in Vermont, but the *Freeman* continually encouraged it to stand firm until, with the help of God, its work should be accomplished. The *Freeman*, whose office was an Underground Railroad station, also urged men to aid fugitive slaves, denying that they would thereby nullify the Federal Constitution. On April 6, 1844, it asked whether Vermonters were to obey the law because slaveholders had secured an interpretation requiring the surrender of fugitives. If so, they would be committing the same crime as those people

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[12]Barnes and Dumond, eds., *op. cit.*, III, 953–954; Gilbert H. Barnes, *op. cit.*, 181.

[13]Crockett, *op. cit.*, III, 344.

[14]*New England Quarterly, op. cit.*, 244–5.

who originally reduced the blacks to slavery. In comparison with that crime petty theft and robbery sank into insignificance. The rendition of fugitives was a violation of the *higher law* inscribed by God on the heart of man. When a constitution required people to destroy the *inalienable* rights of man, to reduce him to the condition of a chattel to be bought, sold, plundered, and even murdered, *no good could be secured by that instrument equal to the evil it enjoined*, and the sooner it was set at naught the better. The people belonged first to God and next to humanity. The respect and obedience they owed to the government were limited by that government's regard for the laws of universal justice.[15]

For a dozen years or more before Joseph Poland printed this editorial in *The Green Mountain Freeman*, numerous Vermonters had been breaking the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 at every opportunity, and the more drastic law of 1850 only served to add to their number and to increase their opportunities.[16]

Although the old parties in Vermont attacked the new one, they did not attack its principles. On the contrary, they themselves made anti-slavery professions even while supporting slaveholders for national office. This inconsistency was not overlooked by the Liberty Party in its rejoinders.[17]

In the autumn of 1840 the party had proposed and succeeded in passing a personal liberty law, which assured to fugitive slaves trial in the County Courts of the counties where they were arrested. The State's attorney of the county concerned, or some other attorney in his absence, was to act as counsel for the prisoner, who was entitled to the writ of *habeas corpus* and to subpoenas for his witnesses. The claimant could not receive a warrant for the arrest of the party claimed until he had filed with the county clerk a bond for $1,000, with two competent sureties, to cover the costs of the prosecution. In case he lost the verdict he must pay $100 and any damages sustained to the party, who could

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[15] *New England Quarterly, op. cit.*, 240–1.

[16] *Post*, pp. 67–102.

[17] *New England Quarterly, op. cit.*, 245.

not be molested again on the same claim. Any person attempting it was liable to conviction for kidnaping, a long term in the State prison, and the forfeiture of $500 to the party aggrieved. Any judge or other State officer issuing a certificate for the removal of the alleged fugitive from the State, except in accordance with this act, could be punished for a misdemeanor.[18]

In 1841 the Liberty Party had nominated a former Whig for governor and a former Locofoco for lieutenant-governor. The nominee for the governorship had immediately announced his adherence to the fugitive's right to a jury trial, his abhorrence of slavery, and his advocacy of its abolition in the District of Columbia and the Territories.[19]

In 1843 the party was instrumental in effecting the repeal of the law of 1840 and the enactment of a new one by which Courts of record and magistrates of Vermont could issue no process in fugitive slave cases. Sheriffs, bailiffs, jailers, constables, and citizens were forbidden to detain or remove persons claimed as fugitives, and those offending against these provisions were liable to severe penalties. The only officers exempted from the operation of this law were the judges of the United States Circuit and District Courts, the marshal and deputy marshal of the State District, and persons acting under their authority.[20]

In 1845 the Liberty candidate for governor withdrew from the contest on account of "earnest entreaties, persuasions and threats." Twice the party drew enough strength from the Whigs to throw the election of the governor into the Legislature. It also greatly influenced the religious denominations, which usually held their conventions one day after the political meeting and in the same place.[21]

By 1846 the Liberty candidate for governor polled fifteen per cent of the total vote, but most of the voters continued to adhere to the Whig Party, which was less subservient to the slave power than the Democrats. In

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[18] *Acts and Resolves*, 1839, pp. 13–15.

[19] *New England Quarterly, op. cit.*, 248.

[20] *Acts and Resolves*, 1843, pp. 11–12.

[21] *New England Quarterly, op. cit.*, 248.

1848 Van Buren, on the Free Soil issue, received an anti-slavery vote of more than thirteen thousand eight hundred in Vermont, or three thousand more than Lewis Cass, the Northern dough-face Democratic candidate, received, and more than half as many as Taylor. In the following year the Free Soilers almost won in the State and threw the election into the Legislature. Vermont responded to Free Soil. *The Green Mountain Freeman,* still under the management of Mr. Poland, moved with the current, and the Free Soilers in the Legislature helped in the adoption of a resolution, in November, 1850, declaring the intention of that body to use constitutional means to procure the repeal of the new Fugitive Slave Law or its modification, so as to protect the rights of Vermonters.[22] At the same time the Legislature passed a law prescribing the rules for granting the writ of *habeas corpus* and trial by jury in fugitive slave cases, requiring circuit judges to issue the writ in such cases, instructing any judicial or executive officer who learned of the intended arrest of a fugitive to notify at once the State's attorney of the county in which the party lived, so that he might be defended at the next stated term of the County Court. This law became immediately operative.[23]

Other anti-slavery newspapers of Vermont included *The Spirit of '76,* which was printed at Windsor during 1835–1837; *The Voice of Freedom,* at Montpelier in 1839; *The Liberty Herald,* at Burlington during 1846–1848; *The Rutland Republican,* which was Free Soil in 1848; *The Vermont Star,* at Rutland, in 1849; *The Bennington Gazette,* a Free Soil organ, in 1849; *The Spirit of the Age,* also a Free Soil paper, at Woodstock; and *The Voice of Freedom,* at Brandon. Anti-slavery matters were admitted to the columns of *The Green Mountain Eagle and Even Fellows Gazette,* and, although *The Vermont Union Whig* of Brandon editorially condemned slavery in its issue of April 18, 1849, it advocated "masterly inactivity" in dealing with the question. There were doubtless numerous other anti-

[22]Crockett, *op. cit.*, III, 320, 358.

[23]*Ibid.*, 9.

slavery newspapers in Vermont, but their principles are not mentioned in M. D. Gilman's *Bibliography of Vermont.*

In 1852, when the election was again in the hands of the Legislature, the Democratic nominee, John Robinson, was elected governor after twenty ballots by the aid of the Free Soilers. Vermont had had no Democratic governor for twenty-five years and has never had one since. In the same year a Free Soiler was elected speaker of the State House of Representatives.[24]

On December 16, 1853, appeared the first issue of *The Liberty Standard, Temperance Advocate and Vermont Farmer,* which was published at Montpelier.[25]

The destruction of the Whig Party in Vermont came with the passage, in March, 1854, of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, against which the Legislature protested. Thus New Mexico and Utah were permitted to determine for themselves whether they would be free-soil or slave-holding despite the principle which had been laid down in the Missouri Compromise more than thirty years before. In fact the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill evoked from the Legislature more reports and resolutions than any of the other national laws during the slavery struggle. In Vermont a call was issued for a convention to meet in July at Montpelier of all opponents of the Kansas-Nebraska measure. It was presided over by the Hon. Lawrence Brainerd, of St. Albans, and was attended by Whigs, Democrats, and Free Soilers. Mr. Brainerd had been the candidate of the Liberty Party and later of the Free Soil Party for governor for several years from 1846 onward and in 1854 was elected United States senator to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Senator Upham. The nominees of the convention were elected by sweeping majorities, as was also the case in 1855, when the new party took the name Republican. In February, 1856, Mr. Brainerd was a delegate to the preliminary National Republican Convention at Pittsburgh, and in the following June he called to order the first Republican National Convention at Philadelphia. He

[24]Crockett, *op. cit.*, III, 412.

[25]See file of Vermont Hist. Soc. in Montpelier.

was one of the early anti-slavery men who lived to see the slave emancipated, his death occurring in 1870.[26]

A few anti-slavery sermons were published in Vermont, their number being no indication of the number actually preached. On April 9, 1841, the Rev. Cyrus Prindle preached his sermon on the "Sinfulness of American Slavery" in the Methodist Episcopal Church at Middlebury. It was published there the same year. It deals with the conditions arising out of slavery which made it sinful. The author denied that slavery was confined to color and might have argued that it enthralled the slaveholders as well as their bondmen, even though it rendered the masters irresponsible despots. Slaves could not own property, were subjected to cruel and unusual punishments, were denied education, discouraged in religion, and often worked to death. Hence the Declaration of Independence was farcical and would so remain until steps were taken to remedy the evil.[27]

On April 12, 1850, Mr. Prindle preached his sermon entitled "Slavery Illegal" in the Wesleyan Methodist Church at Shelburne, Vermont. It was published the same year at Burlington. In this discourse Mr. Prindle argued that the institution of human bondage was an extra-legal thing in the United States. It had had no legal existence in the colonial charters. In 1772 Lord Mansfield had ruled that slavery had never been a legal institution in England. So it could not be in English colonies. According to the judges of the United States Supreme Court, English common law prevailed in the new nation after its separation from the mother country, and that law abounded in maxims on personal liberty. Further, it was not recognized by the Declaration of Independence or by the preamble to the Constitution. Slave catching was not conducive to "domestic tranquility" or a help in securing the "blessings of liberty."[28] All this was good reasoning but too academic. Slavery could not be uprooted in that way.

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[26]Ingle, *op. cit.*, 305; *Dict. of Am. Biog.*, II, 594. Crockett, *op. cit.*, III, 269–271, 389, 429; *Dict. of Am. Biog.*, II, 594.

[27]Prindle, *Sinfulness of Am. Slavery*, 6–14.

[28]Prindle, *Slavery Illegal*, pp. 6–24.

The Rev. Joshua Young was far less logical in his sermon on "God Greater Than Man," preached in the Unitarian Church at Burlington on June 11, 1854, a week after the rendition of Anthony Burns in Boston, which he had witnessed. The sermon was soon published in Burlington. Mr. Young had been a clergyman in the north end of Boston and an agent of the Underground Railroad, which afforded him the opportunity of succoring runaway slaves. His heart was therefore full of commiseration for the fugitives, and he felt deeply the disgrace of Boston in surrendering Burns. In his sermon, written under intense excitement, he held that the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was not binding upon anyone, because there was "a power superior to Congress, a Law higher than any human constitution." In unrestrained language he denounced the sin of slavery and reached the conclusion that if worse came to worst the "strong right arm" and the "God of Might" must settle the question. This was not academic, but it was prophetic.[29] Mr. Young was singularly prophetic, also, as regards matters that were to concern himself in asserting that "noble men, in the fear of God, in the state and in the church, in the forum and in the pulpit," had been "branded as fanatics, thrown out of office, dismissed from their parishes, politically proscribed, socially ostracised" for having dared to lift up their voices against slavery, "not in the South, but in the North—in New England, in Massachusetts;" God forbid that he should say "in Vermont!" Mr. Young was a great admirer of John Brown, who also foresaw the inevitableness of civil war and made his plans accordingly. It was the fact that Mr. Young preached the funeral sermon of "old" John Brown which caused his ostracism by influential parishioners in Burlington and his resignation of the pastorate of its Unitarian Church.[30]

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[29]Young, *God Greater Than Man*, pp. 10–23.

[30]Mary C. Crawford, *The Romance of Old New England Churches*, 323–347.

VI

THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT IN THE LEGISLATURE

An act passed by the Vermont Legislature in October, 1786, penalized the sale and removal of negroes and mulattoes from the State by levying a fine of one hundred dollars upon a person guilty of the offense and ordering its payment to the injured party. The opening paragraph of the act stated that by the Vermont constitution "all the subjects of the commonwealth, of whatever color, are equally entitled to the inestimable blessings of freedom, unless they have forfeited them by the commission of some crime, and the idea of slavery is expressly and totally exploded from our free government."[1]

As early as December, 1805, Vermont was voicing, in the United States Senate, its antagonism to the slave trade. On December 12 of the year named Senator Stephen R. Bradley announced a bill to prohibit the importation of slaves after 1808. On December 8, 1806, he introduced a similar bill, which passed on January 27. One of its supporters in the House was Gideon Olin, of Vermont, who favored punishing slave traders with death and had previously submitted resolutions passed by the Legislature of his State which showed the sentiments of his constituents. Despite the passage of this act the slave trade continued unabated.[2]

Vermont was again heard from on the slavery question in 1820, when the Missouri Compromise was under consideration in Congress. The vote of the State's representatives was practically unanimous against the pro-slavery amendments to the bill, and amendments to prohibit the extension of slavery in the Territory were proposed by

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[1]Wm. Slade, *State Papers of Vermont*, (Middlebury, 1823), p. 505.

[2]Walter Hill Crockett, *Vermont, the Green Mountain State* (1921), III, 444; *Annals of Congress*, 9th Congr., 2d Sess., 237; *ibid.*, 1st Sess., 343–344; W. E. B. DuBois, *Suppression of Afr. Slave Trade to U. S. A.* (1896), 108 ff.

Roland C. Mallory, of Vermont. Meanwhile, the Legislature adopted a report and some resolutions concerning the admission of Missouri under recommendations from Governor Richard Skinner. These resolutions and report instructed the congressmen of Vermont to do their utmost to prevent the admission of Missouri into the Union and were submitted to the United States Senate on December 9, 1820, by Senator Tichenor. Among other things the report declared slavery to be "incompatible with the vital principles of all free governments" and to tend to their ruin. It paralyzed industry, the greatest source of national wealth, stifled the love of freedom, and endangered the safety of the nation. It was prohibited by the laws of nature, which were equally binding on governments and individuals. "The right to introduce and establish slavery in a free government did not exist."[3]

In 1827 the Vermont Colonization Society exerted its influence upon the Legislature and secured the adoption of resolutions instructing the State's senators and representatives in Washington to promote laws in aid of the American Colonization Society. The State's hostility to the South was increased by her demand for the enactment of a law at this time to afford such protection to the American wool grower and manufacturer as to enable him to enter foreign markets on a competitive basis. The reason for this lay in Vermont's merino sheep industry.[4]

During the years 1828 to 1836 state politics was deeply affected by the Anti-Masonic movement. In 1837, when this interest had died out, the hope was expressed by Silas Wright, a Democratic senator from the State of New York, that the people of the Green Mountain State would not be diverted "by some other exciting topic or political hobby like Anti-slavery or modern abolitionism."[5]

Already, however, the State was dotted over with eighty-nine anti-slavery societies, and had shown its hostility both

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[3]Crockett, *op. cit.*, III, 166; *Annals of Congress*, 16th Congr., 2d. Sess., 78–79.

[4]Crockett, *op. cit.*, III, 223.

[5] *Ibid.*, 279.

at home and in Washington to the admission of Arkansas as a State.

In 1833 Colonel Jonathan P. Miller of Montpelier appeared in the Legislature and became an anti-slavery leader. From the autumn of 1836 the movement scarcely flagged. At mid-November of the year just named the Legislature adopted resolutions against the abridgement of the free expression of opinions and the transmission of them through the mail by Congress and the State governments, which the Legislature declared they had no constitutional right to do; in favor of Congress exercising its power to abolish slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia; and requesting the governor to send copies of these resolutions to the executives of the other States and to the Vermont senators and representatives in Congress.[6]

During the following months numerous petitions and memorials adverse to slavery poured in from citizens in all parts of the State and were referred by the Legislature to a special committee for consideration and report. In the autumn of 1837 this committee reported that it had been unable to find in the Constitution of the United States any provision delegating to Congress the power to admit an independent State into the Union. It held that the purchase and annexation of Louisiana and Florida had been unwarranted acts by the Government, although they had met with popular approbation. Texas had belonged to Mexico, which had abolished slavery; but as soon as the former had been separated from the latter it had adopted slavery. The annexation of Texas would strengthen the slave power, which demanded from the North the surrender of freedom of speech, the liberty of the press, and the right of petition. Vermont, which had borne honorable testimony against oppression at all times, objected to being affiliated with a new State whose constitution recognized domestic slavery. The committee believed that the annexation of Texas would soon lead either to the dissolution of the Union, or to the political degradation of the free States, and eventually to the overthrow of their common liberties. It therefore recom-

[6] *Acts and Resolves*, Oct. sess., 1836, p. 53.

mended that the Legislature adopt the following resolutions: (1) that the Vermont senators and representatives in Congress be requested to exert their influence in that body to prevent the annexation of Texas; (2) that the Legislature solemnly protest against the admission into the Union of any State whose constitution tolerated slavery; (3) that Congress has full power under the Constitution to abolish slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia and in the Territories of the United States; (4) that it also has the power to prohibit the slave trade between the several States; (5) that the senators and representatives of Vermont in Congress be instructed to present these resolutions and the report to their respective houses and to use their influence to carry them speedily into effect; and (6) that the governor be requested to transmit copies thereof to our senators and representatives in Congress, to the governors of the other States, and to the president of the United States.

Most of these resolutions were adopted, the ones omitted being that concerning the power of Congress to prohibit the slave trade between the States and that requesting the governor to transmit copies to the president, governors, and the Vermont senators and representatives in Congress.[7] On December 18, 1837, Senator Swift presented a memorial against slavery in the District of Columbia and the admission of Texas and took occasion to characterize the petitioners from whom it came. They were not, he declared, "the miserable fanatics which the senator from South Carolina supposed; they were among the most intelligent and respectable of the community." The Legislature of Vermont had adopted resolutions on this subject. It was not a question of party in that State, for men of all parties could unite upon it. Next day, when Mr. Calhoun was present, Senator Swift again brought forward the memorial amid some tumult. Calhoun deemed the moment "one of deepest importance." He had never heard that the resolution had been passed by the Vermont Legislature but might have anticipated it. "He had long foreseen the present state of things" and the time had now come when it was to be determined whether

[7] *Acts and Resolves*, Oct. sess., 1837, pp. 60, 106–7.

we were "to remain as one united and happy people," or whether this union was "to be dissolved by the hand of violence." Vermont had "struck a deep and dangerous blow into the vitals of our confederacy." The situation was serious from Calhoun's point of view, because the refusal to receive and debate the memorial would have overriden his own states rights doctrine, the memorial being from a sovereign State. Senator Swift avoided the issue by moving that the document be laid upon the table without printing.[8]

In the previous session Senator William Slade of Vermont had made the slaveholders furious by a violent abolition speech. His incessant denunciation of slavery greatly helped to bring about the adoption of the Pinckney or gag resolution. Nevertheless, he was ready to introduce the resolution at the beginning of 1837–1838 session which Swift had previously offered, and, in fact, he greatly aggravated the Southerners by delivering a lengthy speech on slavery. Both the Georgia and Virginia delegations withdrew, while John Quincy Adams' motion to adjourn was adopted. Next day a gag resolution was introduced by Senator Patton and adopted before Slade could continue his harangue.[9]

On January 20, 1842, Mr. Stocks, a representative from Vermont, declared in Congress, with a number of anti-slavery petitions in his hands, that he would present them "if this were Liberty Hall," but would forbear since "it was Slavery Hall." On April 14 of the same session Senator Slade affirmed that the annexation of Texas would mean "utter ruin to the Union of the states," which "would be dissolved ipso facto from that moment." With one accord the Vermont representatives voted for the Wilmot Proviso, which undertook to exclude slavery from any territory that might be acquired as a result of the Mexican War. Upham of Vermont introduced a similar bill in the Senate, which was defeated by the efforts of General Cass.[10]

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[8] *Congressional Globe*, 25th Congr., 2d. Sess., VI, 34, 38.

[9] Crockett, *op. cit.*, III, 296–297; John W. Burgess, *Middle Period* (1901), 256–262.

[10] Albert Bushnell Hart, *Am. Hist. Told by Contemporaries*, IV, 38–40; Edward Ingle, *Southern Sidelights* (1896), 305; Crockett, *op. cit.*, III, 325, 364; Burgess, *op. cit.*, 336.

In the fall of 1838 the two Houses of the General Assembly of Vermont adopted a joint resolution repeating more forcibly their instructions to the State's senators and representatives in Washington concerning the annexation of Texas, slavery, and the slave trade. They were "to use their utmost efforts to prevent the annexation of Texas and to procure the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia and the Territories of the United States, and the slave trade between the several States and Territories. The reception of this resolution was ably defended in the United States Senate by Samuel Prentiss, of Montpelier, Vermont. Mr. Prentiss had been a representative in the Legislature in 1824–25, chief justice of the State Supreme Court in 1829, and United States senator from 1831 to 1842. From that year until his death on January 15, 1857, he served as United States district judge.[11]

Another joint resolution protested against the adoption by the Federal House of Representatives on December 21, 1837, of the resolution by which "all petitions, memorials and papers, touching the abolition of slavery, or the buying, selling or transferring of slaves, in any State, District or Territory of the United States," were "laid upon the table, without being debated, printed, read or referred." This resolution was characterized as "a daring infringement of the right of the people to petition, and a flagrant violation of the Constitution of the United States."

A third resolution instructed the Vermont senators and representatives in Congress to present the above resolutions to their respective Houses and to use their influence to carry them into effect, and a fourth one asked the governor to send copies of them to the president and the Vermont senators and representatives in Congress.[12]

In 1837 and again in 1838 anti-slavery resolutions from the Vermont Legislature, together with numerous similar petitions from other Northern States, were laid on the table

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[11]Samuel Prentiss, *Speech upon the Question of the Reception of the Vermont Resolution on the Subject of the Admission of Texas, the Domestic Slave Trade, and Slavery in the District of Columbia* (Washington, 1838); Drake, *Dict. of Am. Biog.* (1872), p. 738.

[12]*Acts and Resolves*, Oct. sess., 1838, p. 23.

by the Federal House of Representatives. This only aroused greater indignation throughout the Green Mountains. A resolution adopted by one of the local abolition societies declared that "the disposition of the anti-slavery petitions by those resolutions passed in the House of Representatives . . . is virtually denying the right of petition, trampling in the dust the last vestige of freedom, and chanting the funeral dirge of the Constitution over the prostrate liberties of the people."[13]

For a decade or more fugitive slaves had been seeking safety in Vermont, or by flight through the State in Canada. Under the federal law of 1793 they had been subject to reclamation and removal from the State by summary process. At length, in the fall of 1840, the Legislature sought to remedy this situation by extending to such as might be seized the right of trial by jury and the defense of counsel, while placing obstacles in the way of the claimant or his agent. The new act provided that the identity of the alleged fugitive, the fact of his or her escape into Vermont, and the claim of his or her services should be determined by jury. Every writ for the arrest of such a person should be returnable to the County Court in the county where the fugitive had been apprehended. The jury was to be drawn in the same manner as for the trial of civil causes, and the said matters should be tried and determined like any issue of fact in such Court. If the finding of the jury should be in favor of the claimant upon all the matters submitted the Court would grant him a certificate carefully describing the fugitive and stating that he or she owed service to him under the laws of the claimant's State. However, in case the jury found against the claimant the fugitive should be set at liberty forthwith and never again molested on the same claim. Any person who should later arrest, or proceed to retake or remove from the State, the alleged fugitive on this claim under any process whatsoever should be deemed guilty of kidnaping and upon conviction punished by incarceration in the State prison for not more than ten years.

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[13] *Voice of Freedom*, March 2, 1839, quoted in *New England Quarterly*, Apr., 1929, pp. 236–7.

The State's attorney of the county concerned should be notified of the proceeding against the fugitive, render his professional services in the case, attend the trial, and receive such compensation as the Court certified to be reasonable, which would be paid as a part of the contingent expenses of the State. In case the State's attorney should fail to perform these duties the Court would appoint counsel to conduct the defense, who would be paid in the same manner. The fugitive would be entitled to the benefit of *habeas corpus* and to subpoenas for his witnesses without fees. Every constable and sheriff receiving the writs were to serve them and be paid the usual fees as part of the contingent expenses of the State.

No person should receive a warrant to arrest a fugitive until he had filed with the county clerk a bond of $1,000 payable to the State treasurer, with two competent freeholders of Vermont as sureties, approved by the Court, the bond being conditioned to pay all costs and expenses accruing in the prosecution and chargeable to the claimant, including the weekly payment of $2 to the custodian of the fugitive for the latter's support as long as he should be detained by the proceedings, and in case the claimant lost the verdict he must pay the fugitive $100 and all damages which he might sustain. The claimant's bond could be prosecuted by any person claiming any benefit from its provisions, the prosecution being in the name of the State treasurer, but without making the State liable for any costs involved.

Any judge or other officer of Vermont who should issue a certificate for the removal of a fugitive from the State, except in pursuance of the provisions of this act and in the manner therein prescribed, would be liable to punishment for a misdemeanor; and any person who, without the authority of law, should remove or attempt to remove from the State a fugitive, or a person claimed as such, was to forfeit $500 to the party aggrieved, be deemed guilty of kidnaping, and upon conviction be confined in the State prison for a term not exceeding ten years.[14]

In 1841 the Legislature returned to its attack upon slavery in the District of Columbia, the impairment by

[14] *Acts and Resolves*, 1839, pp. 13–15.

Congress of the right of petition, and the admission of new slave States. It declared that at the time of the cession of the District Congress had re-established the slave Courts of Maryland and Virginia, that the toleration of slavery at the seat of the National Government was a manifest violation of the first principles of justice, which tended to corrupt the moral sense of the whole people, and that the slave trade in the District was scarcely less inhuman than the African slave trade.

For these reasons the Legislature called upon the Vermont senators and representatives in Congress to work for the early repeal of all laws authorizing slavery in the District, to devote their utmost endeavors to prevent the adoption by either House of any rule, resolution, or usage limiting the constitutional right of the people to petition Congress for the redress of grievances, and objecting to the admission of any new State whose constitution authorized slavery. The governor was requested to forward copies of these resolutions to the senators and representatives from Vermont in Congress.[15]

A year later the Legislature as representatives of the people of the State protested against the admission of any State recognizing slavery and, in particular, against the annexation of Texas. It declared its belief in the constitutional power of Congress to abolish slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia and in the Territories, and urged that in case Congress refused to act in the District the seat of government be removed to a place where the evils complained of did not and could not exist. It further declared its conviction that Congress possessed the constitutional power to prohibit the slave trade between the States, to make such laws as would effectually prevent the trade, and that it ought to exercise that power.

The Legislature favored the amendment of the Constitution so as to prevent the existence of slavery in the United States, and it instructed the State's senators and representatives in Washington to present the foregoing resolutions to their respective Houses and to strive for their adoption.

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[15] *Acts and Resolves*, 1841, p. 33.

Again the governor was asked to send copies of the resolutions to those gentlemen.[16]

In the autumn of 1843 the Legislature was impelled to take more drastic action than hitherto in favor of the fugitive slaves, who were still traveling along the lines of the Underground Railroad in Vermont, or were sojourning quietly in some of its anti-slavery communities. It now passed an act for the protection of personal liberty, which meant the personal liberty of the fugitive. This act provided that no Court of record, judge, justice of the peace, or other magistrate of the State should thereafter take cognizance of, or grant any certificate or other process in, any case arising under the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 to any person claiming another as a fugitive slave. No sheriff or his deputy, high bailiff, constable, jailer, or other officer or citizen should arrest, detain, or remove from any place in the State to another within or without its limits, or aid in seizing, detaining, or removing any person who was or might be claimed as a fugitive from labor.

Any judge or other State magistrate or citizen who should offend against these provisions should forfeit a sum of not more than $1,000 to the use of the State, recoverable upon information or indictment, and be confined in the State prison for not more than five years. However, this act was not to be construed as extending to any citizen of Vermont acting as a judge of the Circuit or District Court of the United States, or as a marshal or deputy marshal of the State District, or to any person acting under the authority of the said Courts or marshal. This act went into immediate effect and replaced the act of 1840, which gave trial by jury to fugitive slaves.[17]

It was also in 1843 that the Legislature uttered another protest against any attempt to annex Texas, which it called unconstitutional and dangerous to the stability of the Union. It would assent to no purpose or measure designed to enlarge the slaveholding territory of the country and thus to increase the political power of the slave States. It regarded the right of petition as sacred and the rule of the

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[16] *Acts and Resolves*, 1842, p. 97.

[17] *Ibid.*, 1843, pp. 11–12.

Federal House of Representatives excluding all petitions on the subject of slavery as a wanton violation of the Constitution and laws of the country. It desired the speedy abolition of slavery throughout the land and declared its purpose to use all lawful means to accomplish that end. It maintained that the rights of *habeas corpus* and *trial by jury* were sacred and inviolable and could not be lawfully denied to any human being, irrespective of color and condition. It asserted its belief that all slaves taken by their owners upon the high seas beyond the jurisdiction of the slave States were and of right ought to be free, the same as if their owners had voluntarily transported them to a free State. Finally, it requested the Vermont senators and representatives to present these resolutions to their respective Houses in Congress and to use their best endeavors to carry out the principles thereof.[18]

During the next four years the Legislature failed to take action concerning slavery matters, but in 1848 it again took them up, stating that it had not been able to discover any foundation for human slavery in the divine or natural law of nations, its origin in all cases being traceable to fraud or physical force. All local laws for its continuance and protection had been later introduced by the slaveholders themselves to perpetuate their usurpation. It affirmed Congress's possession of the power to prohibit slavery in the Territories of New Mexico and California, which ought to be exercised immediately. Without such prohibition and enforcement by the strong arm of the Government, there was great danger that it would obtain a foothold despite the local laws, thereby adding a darker stain to the national honor and subjecting the free States to the injustice of a greater inequality in their representation in Congress.

The Legislature complained of the travesty of the respesentatives of free men at Washington maintaining that liberty was inalienable and legislating for the general welfare, while their eyes were insulted by the frequent spectacle of men chained, shackled, and driven to market, or confined in pens awaiting buyers. Slavery in the District of Columbia

[18] *Acts and Resolves*, 1843, pp. 32–3.

exerted a baneful influence upon the action of Congress, checking the freedom of debate, threatening the freedom of the press, and controlling the executive department. Hence, unless slavery was speedily abolished in the District, it was the duty of Congress to pass a law removing the seat of Government to some free State, more central and convenient for the Nation, where the representatives of the people might be more free to legislate for the general welfare.[19]

In 1848, also, the Legislature requested the Vermont senators and representatives at Washington to introduce a resolution at the next session of Congress directing the appropriate committee in each branch to report a bill to prohibit the slave traffic in the District and on the high seas, also a bill to repeal all laws maintaining slavery in the District, and that they demand the yeas and nays on the resolution. They were also to use their influence to procure the application of the Ordinance of 1787 to all newly acquired Territories.

In the autumn of the following year the Legislature denounced slavery as a crime against humanity entailed upon the country by the predecessors of the framers of the Constitution. It was the sole evil in the body politic which had been tolerated by the framers as a thing of inexorable necessity. The so-called "compromise of the Constitution" had restrained the Federal Government from interfering with slavery only in the States where it then existed and from interfering with the slave trade only for a limited time, which had long since expired. The powers conferred upon Congress by the Constitution to suppress the slave trade, regulate commerce between the States, govern the Territories, and admit new States might be rightfully used to prevent the extension of slavery into territory then free and to abolish slavery and the slave trade wherever either existed in the country. The senators and representatives of Vermont were urged to resist by every constitutional means the extension of slavery, whether by the annexation of free territory to slaveholding Delaware, or by the admission of territory already acquired or hereafter to be acquired, without

[19] *Acts and Resolves*, 1848, p. 40.

an express prohibition of slavery in its constitution or in the enabling act of Congress. They were also urged to exert themselves for the speedy organization of territorial governments in New Mexico and California, with provisions forever excluding therefrom involuntary servitude, except for crime.[20]

In April, 1850, Clay's compromise measures were under consideration in the United States Senate by a committee of thirteen, including Senator Phelps of Vermont, who alone wished to incorporate the policy of the Wilmot Proviso. The Compromise was enacted without the support of any Vermont member of the Senate or House.[21]

The Legislature adopted resolutions relating to so much of the governor's message as dealt with slavery. It declared that Vermont had no new position to take on the subject, which she regarded as a grievous crime to its victims, vitally hostile to the prosperity of the slave States themselves, and injurious to the business interests of the whole country. The Legislature declared itself unyieldingly opposed to the extension of the evils and influence of the system. Nevertheless, it recognized the duty of courtesy and kindness towards those of its fellow-citizens who cherished slavery, and would respect their constitutional rights. Should occasion serve it would be as hostile to their enemies as to their errors.

It further declared that the people of Vermont did not approve of the new Fugitive Slave Act, considering it to be opposed to the great principles of civil liberty. Therefore the Legislature would use all constitutional means to procure its repeal, or such modifications of it as would protect the rights of the citizens of the State. One thing it could rejoice in, and that was the admission of California with a constitution and a populace hostile to slavery.[22]

Simultaneously with the adoption of the above resolutions, the Legislature passed an act to impede the execution of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 in Vermont by supplementing the act of the autumn of 1843. This supplementary

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[20] *Acts and Resolves*, 1849, pp. 47–8.

[21] Crockett, *op. cit.*, III, 364.

[22] *Vt. House of Representatives. Resolutions relative to the Fugitive Slave Law*, Oct. 16, 1850.

act made it the duty of the judicial and executive officers in their respective counties who had good reason to believe that an inhabitant was about to be claimed or arrested as a fugitive slave to give notice forthwith to the State's attorney of the county wherein the person lived. This official was then to use faithfully all legal means to protect him and procure his discharge. One of these means was to make written application to a judge of the Supreme Court or a circuit judge, giving the name of the prisoner and the names of the persons detaining him and stating that the former was claimed, arrested, or imprisoned as a fugitive slave. This application would be sufficient authority for issuing a writ of *habeas corpus*, which might be signed by one of the said judges, or by the clerk of the Supreme or the County Court for return to either of those Courts in session in the county, or, in vacation, to either of the judges.

The act gave to the circuit judges of the several judicial circuits of Vermont the same power and duties which had been given to the judges of the Supreme Court as regards *habeas corpus*. Whenever the writ was granted in vacation the alleged fugitive was not to be discharged, but was entitled to an appeal to the next stated term of the Court of the county where the hearing was had, and must furnish such bail within such time as the judge issuing the writ might think reasonable. The Court to which the appeal was made, or any other Court to which the writ was returnable, was upon the application of either party to the proceedings to order a trial by jury on all questions of fact in issue, and the costs of the trial would be chargeable to the State whenever they would otherwise have been chargeable to the alleged fugitive. This act went into effect from its passage on November 13, 1850.[23]

The Legislature was in the habit of requesting the governor to send copies of its resolutions on national issues to other Legislatures. Those sent to Virginia at this time were returned by its Legislature, which declined to consider them until the Vermont body should "show itself careful of the peace of the Union by conforming to the enactments

[23] *Acts and Resolves*, 1850, pp. 9–10.

of the constitution of the United States and laws passed in pursuance thereof."[24]

In the autumn of 1851 an "exposition of the African slave trade," which had been published by the Society of Friends, was distributed among the members of the Vermont House of Representatives and was doubtless circulated among the members of the Senate. This publication showed that the traffic in slaves was still carried on under the American flag. Hence the Legislature adopted a resolution calling upon the State's senators and representatives in Congress to use all proper exertions to procure the effectual suppression of the traffic.[25]

On October 16, 1854, the House of Representatives of Vermont adopted reports and resolutions denouncing slavery and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.[26]

In the October session of 1855 a select committee of the Vermont Senate reported that the State knew that the hour of trial had come and was ready to meet it. "Eye to eye, hand to hand, foot to foot, the struggle between Liberty and Slavery" was to be carried on. Her sons had never yet gone into battle "with trembling steps," and their hearts would "not fail them in the great battle of the world between the principles of Despotism and those of Freedom." This report and the resolutions to which it gave rise were unanimously adopted by the Senate and by an overwhelming vote in the House.[27]

The Legislature declared that Vermont had no new sentiments of abhorrence to make known respecting the extension of slavery by the authority or connivance of the National Government into any Territory which was free by nature or by law from that great curse of humanity. It had

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[24]*Resolution Relative to the Fugitive Slave Law, 1850;* Crockett, *op. cit.*, III, 389.

[25]*Acts and Resolves*, 1851, p. 70.

[26]*Reports and Resolutions on Slavery and the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise.* Printed by order of the House of Representatives, Montpelier, 1854; *Vermont—Resolutions Relating to Slavery in the House of Representatives*, Oct. 16, 1854.

[27]*Reports and Resolutions on Slavery* . . . by the Select Committee of the Senate. Montpelier, Vt., 1855; *Vermont—Report of the Select Committee of the Senate, on so much of the Governor's Message as relates to the Extension of Slavery* . . . Oct., 1855.

always protested against it, as it did now, and it intended to resist by all the lawful and constitutional means in its power.

Next the Legislature expressed its views on the situation in Kansas. The people of that Territory had been invited to settle there by the acts of the National Government and had then been left wholly unprotected from lawless invaders, who by force had usurped the powers which had been given only to its proper inhabitants. They had done right in disavowing all allegiance to the body their invaders had placed over them. In organizing themselves as a political community, they had exercised the rights which God had given to all human beings so placed. With a constitution framed by themselves and sanctioned by a majority of the adult male inhabitants, the people of Kansas could rightfully ask Congress to admit their Territory as a free and independent State. The senators and representatives of Vermont were urged to vote for its admission.

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 still excited the ire of the members of the Legislature. They denounced it as a violation of the Constitution, an insult to the free States, an outrage on the rights of man, and a disgrace on the statute book of the Nation; and they asserted that the people of Vermont would indignantly rebuke any senator or representative of theirs in Congress who did not use his influence to bring about its complete repeal.

The last of these resolutions of 1855 declared that the act of Judge Kane of the United States Court for the eastern district of Pennsylvania in issuing a writ of *habeas corpus* as a means of reducing again to slavery persons who had been freed by their former owner, was a gross usurpation of authority not given him by the Constitution or any law whatsoever. His declaration that by national law a slaveholder might freely take a slave across a free State and still retain his power over him as master, any State law to the contrary notwithstanding, was in defiance of the decision of the ablest jurists in all States and in all times. All attempts to proceed in accordance with so monstrous a doctrine should meet with determined resistance by all the authorities and inhabitants of the free States.[28]

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[28] *Acts and Resolves*, 1855, pp. 91–2.

In 1854 Leonard Marsh published anonymously at Burlington his satirical tract entitled *A Bake Pan for the Dough Faces by One of Them. Try It.* It consisted of quotations, which were duly explained, from rabid Southern newspapers, especially *The Richmond Examiner.* Certain quotations lauded the shooting of a Yankee anti-slavery school teacher, the perpetrator being considered worthy of nothing less than a seat in the Legislature. Other quotations showed that the South expected the North to furnish obsequious men to serve it in various capacities, such as clerks, peddlers, tradesmen, publishers, etc., just as Roman senators employed pliant Greeks. The reader was intermittently cautioned to keep cool for he was to be made "crusty" by hotter coals. The *Examiner* was quoted to the effect that the North, having no unifying institution of slavery, would be swamped by social anarchy once it was disevered from the South. Moreover, having no household establishment, the North had an illegitimate birth-rate of one in fifteen. The author admitted that this heat blistered his own face and suspected that it was causing the palest pastry to flake. He therefore applied some Northern heat, mixed with caustic sarcasm, to certain Southern claims respecting the benefits of slavery.

The pervading missionary aspect of slavery was not to be overlooked. Poor pagans were "brought from dark heathenism into this land of gospel light and liberty" and transformed "into pretty fair average Christians—some of them quite as good as their masters—and. O, admirable economy!—made to pay the expense of their own conversion." A vast amount of cash and many valuable lives wasted in various missionary enterprises, might have been "saved to Christendom by sending for the benighted idolators, buying them of their native princes, making property of them . . . and then compelling them to 'work out their own salvation!'" Conversion through slavery had put a large monthly saving into the South's pocket, in contrast with the outgo of contributions to missionary societies from both the South and North.

Every Southerner claimed that slaves were happier in

bondage than out of it. If induced to leave they pined for the old plantation. Hence it would be a good plan to form fugitives (from freedom) aid societies to assist by money contributions the escape Southward of wayward slaves from the cruel fanatics who were detaining them. The sarcasm and absurdity of this suggestion must have been deeply appreciated in Burlington and every other Vermont community where weary fugitives were being forwarded to Canada after weeks and months of risk and hardship to reach it.

In 1856 select committees of the Vermont Senate and House reported on slavery and affairs in Kansas, where the war was on between slaveholders and abolitionists to determine what should be the status of that Territory for admission into the Union. As a result of these *Reports* the Legislature appropriated twenty thousand dollars for use by the governor in helping any emigrants from the Green Mountain State who might be in need of clothing and food in Kansas. That the object of this appropriation was not so innocent as was represented could hardly be doubted. *The Richmond Inquirer* declared that Vermont "always foremost in the path of infamy," had taken a step from which its "sisters of New England shrank in prudent apprehensions of possible consequences."[29]

In 1858 Rodney V. Marsh, of Brandon, Vermont, where he maintained a station of the Underground Railroad, wrote a report as chairman of the select committee of the State Legislature on slavery, the Dred Scott decision, and the action of the Federal Government thereon. To this committee had been submitted seven petitions signed by different numbers of citizens residing in all parts of the State from fifty-odd to more than three thousand, "praying for legislative protection against the Fugitive Slave Law, and for the enactment of laws securing freedom to all persons within the State, and protecting its citizens against the aggressions of

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[29]*General Assembly of the State of Vermont. Session of 1856. Reports of the Select Committees of the Senate on Slavery and the Condition of Kansas. And on the Outrage on the Freedom of Debate in Congress* (Burlington, 1856); *Vermont—House of Representatives. Report of Select Committee on Slavery and Affairs in Kansas*, Oct. 30, 1856; Ingle, *op. cit.*, 308.

Slavery and the encroachments of the Federal Government in all its departments."

The report declared that citizens of Vermont and of the free States could be reduced to slavery with impunity and their property destroyed without remedy, and that the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was unconstitutional. Among the joint resolutions reported by the committee were the following: that Vermont would continue to "seek the abolition of slavery at the national capital, and in all places under federal jurisdiction;" and that all laws of Congress which recognized the right of property in man, or deprived any person of liberty without due process of law and a jury trial, or provided that any person should be delivered up as owing service to another without such trial, were unconstitutional and void.

The committee also reported a bill to secure freedom to all persons within Vermont, which provided: that no person within the State should be considered as property or subject as such to sale, purchase, or delivery, nor should any person within its limits be deprived of liberty or property at any time without due process of law; that whenever any person in the State should be deprived of liberty, arrested or detained as owing service to another person who was not an inhabitant of the State, either party might claim a trial by jury; that every person who should deprive or attempt to deprive another of his or her liberty contrary to the preceding sections of this proposed act, he should on conviction pay a fine of not more than $2,000 or less than $500, or be incarcerated in the State prison for a term of not more than ten years.

Neither descent, near or remote, from an African, even though a slave, nor color of the skin, should disqualify any persons from being or becoming citizens of the State. Every slave who should come, or be brought with the consent of his or her master or mistress, or be brought involuntarily into the State, was to be free. Finally, every person who should hold or attempt to hold a slave in Vermont, or any free person of color for any time, however short, should on conviction be kept in the State prison for a term of from one to fifteen years and be fined not more than $2,000. This

bill was enacted into law under the title of "An Act to Secure Freedom to All Persons within This State" in November, 1858.[30]

Of the chairman of the special committee which produced this report *The Green Mountain Freeman* of November 25, 1858, said:

"Of Mr. Marsh, the chairman of the committee, through whose untiring labors the report has been perfected, we have only to say that those who have known him and his long devotion to the cause of Freedom will not be disappointed in a careful perusal of the report. His name will be associated with those of Judge Barrington, Brainerd, Shafter, Slade, Fletcher, Needham, Roberts, and a host of other worthy champions of freedom in Vermont."[31]

The Legislature adopted joint resolutions relative to slavery and the Dred Scott decision late in November, 1858. These resolutions declared that the United States Constitution invested Congress with the sole power to govern the Territories—a power which had always been exercised and never questioned by any department of the government for more than sixty years after the adoption of the Constitution. In the exercise of this power Congress had the same right to exclude slavery or any other evil from the Territories that the States had to prohibit the same within their own borders. It was Congress's duty to exercise this right.

Vermont would continue to resist the admission of new slave States into the Union and the extension of slavery into the Territories, and now as ever would seek the abolition of slavery at the national capital and in all places under federal jurisdiction. All laws of Congress which recognized the right of property in man, or deprived any person of liberty without due process of law and a jury trial or provided that any person should be delivered up as owing service to another without such trial were unconstitutional and void. Property in slaves existed only by the positive law of force in the States creating it. The moment it passed

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[30]*Report of the Select Committee on Slavery, the Dred Scott Decision, and the Action of the Federal Government Thereon*, submitted Thursday, Nov. 18, 1858 (Montpelier, 1858), pp. 3–4, 31–2; *Acts and Resolves*, 1858, pp. 42–44.

[31]*Rutland Daily Herald*, May 31, 1937.

from under the operation of those laws, it was property no longer.

Since the existing Federal Administration and judiciary had denied to the government and people of the United States the right, guaranteed them by the Constitution, of prohibiting the introduction of slavery into the Territories, and the right of the citizens of the independent States to protect their liberties or property by instituting suits in the Courts of the United States, the Legislature of Vermont resolved that the doctrine maintained by a majority of the judges of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case, viz., that slavery existed by virtue of the United States Constitution in all the Territories and other places where the Federal Government had jurisdiction, had no warrant in the Constitution, or in the legislative or judicial history of the country.

These opinions of the Supreme Court had no binding authority upon the people of Vermont or of the United States. No sophistry could make it appear that the citizens of each State were not citizens of the United States, and that citizens *when in the other States* were not entitled to all the rights and privileges of citizens thereof.

Whenever the Federal Government or judiciary refused or neglected to protect the citizens of each State in their lives or liberty when in another State or Territory, the sovereign and independent States could protect their own citizens at whatever hazard or cost.

The Vermont senators and representatives were to use their utmost endeavors to induce Congress to propose amendments to the Constitution providing for the election of the president and vice-president every fourth year by the ballots of the legal voters in the States—a majority of all the votes cast constituting a choice. In the case of no election they could be chosen by Congress.[32]

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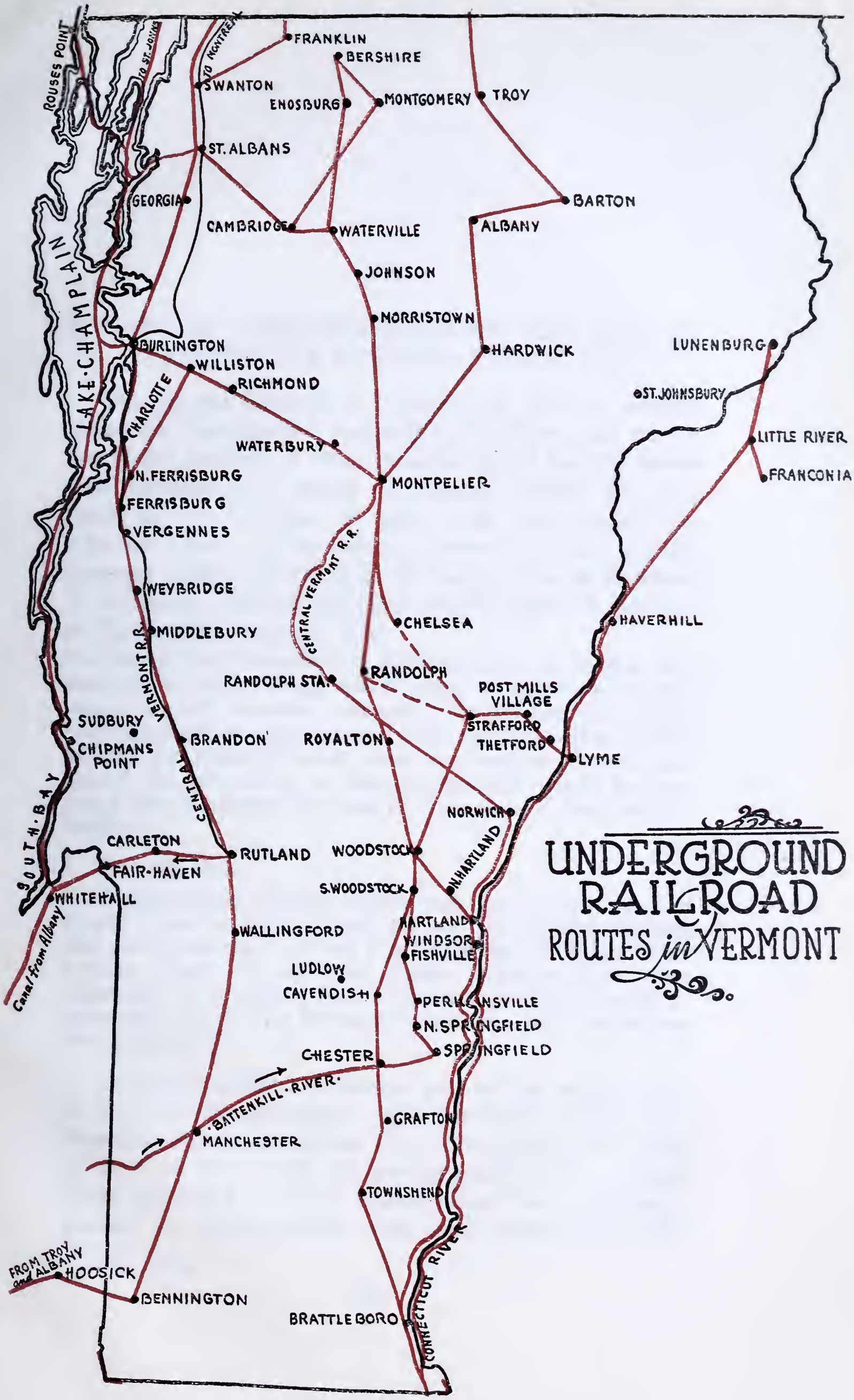
[32]*Report of Select Committee on Slavery. Dred Scott Decision . .* 1838, p. 30.


UNDERGROUND RAILROAD ROUTES in VERMONT
ROUSES POINT
TO ST. JOHNS
TO MONTREAL
LAKE·CHAMPLAIN
FRANKLIN
BERSHIRE
SWANTON
ENOSBURG
MONTGOMERY
TROY
ST. ALBANS
GEORGIA
BARTON
CAMBRIDGE
WATERVILLE
ALBANY
JOHNSON
MORRISTOWN
BURLINGTON
WILLISTON
RICHMOND
HARDWICK
LUNENBURG
ST. JOHNSBURY
CHARLOTTE
WATERBURY
LITTLE RIVER
FRANCONIA
N. FERRISBURG
MONTPELIER
FERRISBURG
VERGENNES
CENTRAL VERMONT R.R.
WEYBRIDGE
CHELSEA
HAVERHILL
MIDDLEBURY
VERMONT R.R.
RANDOLPH STA.
RANDOLPH
POST MILLS VILLAGE
SUDBURY
STRAFFORD
THETFORD
CHIPMANS POINT
BRANDON
ROYALTON
LYME
CENTRAL
NORWICH
SOUTH·BAY
CARLETON
RUTLAND
WOODSTOCK
N. HARTLAND
FAIR-HAVEN
S. WOODSTOCK
WHITEHALL
Canal from Albany
WALLINGFORD
HARTLAND
WINDSOR
FISHVILLE
LUDLOW
CAVENDISH
PERKINSVILLE
N. SPRINGFIELD
CHESTER
SPRINGFIELD
BATTENKILL·RIVER
GRAFTON
MANCHESTER
TOWNSHEND
FROM TROY and ALBANY
HOOSICK
CONNECTICUT RIVER
BENNINGTON
BRATTLEBORO

VII

EXTENT OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN VERMONT; ITS WESTERN TRUNK LINE

The general histories of Vermont say little or nothing about the Underground Railroad in the State, and only a few of the histories of those localities where fugitive slaves were harbored and passed on towards Canada give any space to the activities of those men and women who befriended them. In his volume, *Vermont, A Study of Independence* (1892)[1], Rowland E. Robinson, a son of Rowland T. Robinson, who was the most notable helper of fugitives at Ferrisburgh, says only that

"a line of the Underground Railroad held its hidden way through Vermont, along which many a dark-skinned passenger secretly traveled, concealed during the day in the quiet stations, at night passing from one to another, helped onward by friendly hands until he reached Canada and gained the protection of that government which in later years was to become the passive champion of his rebellious master."

He adds that

"the star-guided fugitive might well feel an assurance of liberty when his foot touched the soil that in the old days had given freedom to Dinah Mattis and her child, and draw a freer breath in the state whose judge in later years demanded of a master, before his runaway slave would be given up to him, that he should produce a bill of sale from the Almighty."

From this meager account one gets no idea of the extent of the Underground system as it developed in the Green Mountain State between the late 1820's and the first years of the Civil War. Only by piecing together the scattered items contained in local histories and the information gleaned by correspondence with aged abolitionists, their

[1]Pp. 234–5.

descendants, and their neighbors can one trace the "trunk lines" of this widespread and secret system, whose traffic continued without interruption during the 1830's, 40's, and 50's.[2] Joseph Poland, who was the principal Underground agent at Montpelier, where more runaways were cared for than any place else in Vermont, and who knew more agents on the two main lines of the traffic than anybody else, says that the system was especially patronized from 1840 to 1850.[3]

In letters to the author Mr. Poland has traced two "trunk lines," one from Bennington up the west side of Vermont to Burlington and the other from Brattleboro up the east side to Montpelier, whence he says three branches diverged, which he also traces. Certain details which seem to have been unknown to Mr. Poland have been derived from other sources. This is also true of more important features, such as the cross-country connection of Bennington with Troy and Albany, New York, by which fugitives entered Vermont; the connection of Brattleboro with towns in northern and central Massachusetts, whence came another stream of runaways; the Battenkill Valley route to Manchester, from which some of the wayfarers were sent across to the eastern side of the State before following a chain of stations northward to Montpelier; and the steamboat service on South Bay and Lake Champlain, which drew off a part of the traffic from the regular Underground "trunk line" running north a few miles east of the State's western boundary. In certain localities incidents have been collected which show how the traffic was conducted and the risks of pursuit were obviated. We are also enabled to gain some acquaintance with notable managers of the system and with a few of the passengers among the hundreds who patronized it.

Fugitive slaves entered Vermont at five points. One of these was at the southeast corner of the State by way of the beautiful Connecticut Valley. Another was a few miles west of Bennington. Still another was at the point where the Battenkill River crosses the western boundary of the State. A fourth was from Lyme, New Hampshire, into the southern

[2]Letter from Rowland T. Robinson, Oct. 28, 1935.
[3]Letter from Mr. Poland, Apr. 7, 1897.

part of Orange County, and the fifth was a few miles south of Lunenberg, where the fugitives crossed the Connecticut from Littleton, New Hampshire.

Fugitives arriving at Bennington came from Albany by way of Troy and Hoosick. Our evidence for this statement is to be found in two letters in possession of the Vermont Historical Society. The first was written by Fayette Shipherd of Albany on November 24, 1840, to Charles Hicks at Hinesdale, Bennington Town, and says that on account of the closing of the canal [by ice] he is sending his Southern friends [fugitives] to patronize Mr. Hick's house, that during the past season there has been a fine run of [Underground] business in Albany, twenty-two runaways in two weeks, thirteen at one time, some of them "noble looking fellows." One female was so near white and so beautiful that her master had been offered for her at different times $1,200, $1,500, and $2,000 "for foulest purposes." A man-hunter from Baltimore had been seen in Albany making observations, but had left without giving any trouble. Mr. Shipherd then asks how the war with oppression was going in Bennington, that blood-stained "Democratic" town, and whether Mr. Hicks could not gather subscriptions for the *Emancipator*, for the winter at least, at fifty cents each. The paper would have a correspondent in Washington during that season to report fully the doings of Congress respecting slavery and the trial of the Amistad captives. Hereafter Mr. Shipherd would merely give Mr. Hicks's address on a card to fugitives and the handwriting would identify the sender.

Mr. Shipherd's reference to the canal being closed is significant, because it shows that in open weather the Underground agents at Albany were in the habit of shipping some of their fugitives on the Hudson River and Champlain Canal, which had been completed about 1820, to Whitehall,[4] New York. From there the wayfarers could proceed on canal boats up South Bay, connecting with steamboats for the journey through Lake Champlain to St. Johns, Canada, or to Rouse's Point on the New York side.

Mr. Shipherd's letter was evidently transmitted to Mr.

[4]Edward Day Collins, *Hist. of Vermont*, 217, 219.

Hicks by Garret Van Hoosen of the Mapletown Union Church at Hoosick, as was also one written by Abel Brown, corresponding secretary of the Eastern New York Anti-Slavery Society at Albany. Mr. Brown's letter is dated June 8, 1842, and asks that the bearer, who had been a slave only a few weeks ago and came well recommended, be received as a friend in need of aid and direction on his way.[5]

At Bennington the principal Underground operator was Dr. S. Wilcox. He was doubtless assisted by other abolitionists, for in July, 1835, an anti-slavery society was formed in Bennington. Two years later its membership was one hundred and forty. Some twenty miles north is Manchester, where Daniel Roberts, Jr., was the best known agent until he removed to Burlington in 1856. Wallingford, the next Underground center, is twenty-three miles farther north. D. E. Nicholson was in charge there and was aided by Philbrook Barrows, Jr., and Lyman Batcheller. Mr. Batcheller built a house for himself in 1835 and occupied it until his death in 1858. His blacksmith shop stood next door and in it he began the manufacture of hoes and hayforks, which he developed into the leading industry of the place. Mr. Barrows entertained fugitives in his house. Rutland is only nine miles north of Wallingford and had R. R. Thrall as its chief agent. He and his helpers sometimes put their passengers on the steam cars for Burlington.[6]

Wallingford was the scene of John T. Trowbridge's novel and drama, *Neighbor Jackwood—A Domestic Drama.* Mr. Trowbridge spent the summer of 1854 in Wallingford and doubtless heard stories of Underground activities which were taking place there and which supplied him with much of his material. He represents Neighbor Jackwood as the protector of Camille, an octoroon slave who had escaped from Louisiana. She was pursued, captured, and rescued and at length a young Vermonter by the name of Hector Danbury took her as his wife. The book was published at Boston in 1857. In the last scene of the play a posse arrives from New York with a warrant for Camille, but she is

[5]Letter from Mrs. Laura E. Scribner, Sept. 28, 1935.

[6]Letter from Jos. Poland, Apr. 12, 1897; letter from E. C. Parmenter, Jr., Sept. 26, 1935.

rescued by a determined body of armed farmers, and at the end three cheers are given for freedom and freedom's true champion—Neighbor Jackwood. While protesting against the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the novel also emphasizes the tragedy of miscegenation.[7]

Not all fugitives were sent north, for Rutland lies about twenty miles east of Whitehall, which was connected by canal with Poultney River and thus with South Bay and Lake Champlain. Therefore it was often convenient to transfer fugitives nine miles west to Castleton, where Erastus and Hervey O. Higley cared for them and passed them on six miles farther to Fair Haven. Erastus Higley had erected his brick house in 1811 and there he lived for fifty years. In 1836 his son Hervey brought his wife home, but the two families still had room for the accommodation of fugitive slaves. These slept on the floor, while their hostesses baked bread and prepared other food for them to take on their journey.[8] At Fair Haven the fugitives were received by Zenas C. Ellis and several of his neighbors. Mr. Ellis lived on South Main Street and sheltered the negroes in his barn. After being fed and otherwise provided for, they were given baskets of food as though they were going on a fishing trip and were conveyed six miles to Whitehall. There they were put on board the canal boats, which towed flats north to bring back loads of lumber.[9] Thus they set forward on their voyage to the Canadian town of St. Johns or to Rouse's Point on the New York side of Lake Champlain. Mr. Ellis was born in Fair Haven in July, 1820, and at the age of twenty-seven married Miss Sarah B. Dyer.[10] Their son, the Hon. Zenas H. Ellis, has in his possession several letters written to his father by fugitives after they had reached their "promised land." He also has a flowered, silk handkerchief which they sent to his grandmother, Belinda Kidder Ellis.[11]

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[7]Trowbridge, *Neighbor Jackwood*—A Domestic Tragedy; Trowbridge, *My Own Story* (1903), p. 225.

[8]Letter from Miss Mary Gerrish Higley, May 5, 1935.

[9]*Rutland Daily Herald*, Dec. 5, 1935.

[10]Andrew N. Adams, *Hist. of Town of Fair Haven, Vt.*, 368–9.

[11]*Rutland Daily Herald, op. cit.;* letter from Jos. Poland, Apr. 12, 1897.

The earliest incident suggestive of Underground Railroad activities in the neighborhood of which we have been speaking is that described by Horace Greely in his *Recollections of a Busy Life* as witnessed by him when he was an apprentice in the offices of *The Northern Spectator* at East Poultney, Vermont, in the late 1820's. A fugitive slave had crossed the line from New York State and found employment in the village, whither his master came to take him back. The negro might have obtained his freedom under the New York law by waiting until he was twenty-eight years old, but he preferred freedom at once. The arrival of the master brought the men and boys to the village green, with the result that the chattel was rescued and spirited away. "Everything on our side," writes Mr. Greely, "was *impromptu* and instinctive; and, nobody suggested that envy or hate of 'the South,' or of New York, or of the master, had impelled the rescue. Our people hated injustice and oppression and acted as if they couldn't help it."[12]

East Poultney lies only five miles southeast of Fair Haven, which was later a regular station on the Underground Railroad between Rutland and Whitehall, New York. The rescue was typical of what an anti-slavery community could do in an emergency.

On the Underground line through Rutland County lived Aaron and Dinah Rogers, a Quaker couple, who harbored fugitives and directed or escorted them to the next station after sending word ahead. Fifteen miles north and slightly west of Rutland is Brandon, where an anti-slavery society of twenty-one members was organized in February, 1836. A year later it had seventy-eight. Two citizens of Brandon are known to have aided fugitive slaves, namely, Arian T. Ramsey, the editor of the *Telegraph*, and Rodney V. Marsh. The latter married Miss Eliza Sprague, became prosperous, and built a handsome mansion at No. 11 Pearl Street in 1853. It still stands and has four Doric pillars supporting the gable end of the front part of the house, which has wings on the two sides and a large extension in the rear. To the slaves receiving hospitality here it must have seemed the acme of

[12]Greeley, *Recollections* (1868), p. 55.

their weary journey to freedom. When Rodney Marsh died, John Greenleaf Whittier wrote to his widow: "Thy husband's name was well known among anti-slavery folk beyond the limits of his state." It should be noted that Brandon is only thirteen miles from South Bay and five from Sudbury, where fugitives were cared for by certain residents.[13] The indications are that some of them were passed on to Chipman's Point, there to take boat for Canada.

But the main stream of the Underground traffic flowed north through Brandon about thirteen miles to Middlebury, which was well supplied with abolitionists. In January, 1835, fourteen men organized an anti-slavery society there. Two years later it had one hundred and seventy-five members. At least three men in Middlebury were Underground workers, namely, R. D. Fuller, E. D. Barber, and Joseph Gordon. Mr. Gordon was a Scotchman and the manager of a cotton mill, while Mr. Barber was a lawyer and a Democrat. Of Mr. Fuller nothing is known, except that Joseph Poland considered him the principal agent in the town.[14]

The trip from Middlebury to the "Chalker farm" in the town of New Haven is only five miles. This farm is about two miles east of Weybridge Village and was owned and tilled by Samuel E. Chalker, who was born on the place in 1801 and died there sixty-three years later. He was an ardent friend of fugitive slaves and sent many of them on ten miles west of north to the Quaker, Rowland T. Robinson, at Ferrisburgh.[15] It is highly probable that there were other Underground agents in New Haven, because it had an anti-slavery society from August, 1836, which numbered more than a hundred members within a year.

In 1793 Mr. Robinson's parents had removed from Newport, Rhode Island, to Ferrisburgh, where their son was born three years later. He was educated in the Friends' Boarding

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[13]Letter and a photograph of the Marsh mansion from Edward S. Marsh, Rodney's son. The *Rutland Herald* of May 31, 1937, contains an illustrated article entitled "Brandon's Famous 'Underground Railway' Mansion." Letter from James S. Rogers, April 17, 1897.

[14]Letter from Rowland E. Robinson, Aug. 19, 1896; letter from Jos. Poland, Apr. 12, 1897.

[15]Letter from Mr. Robinson, Oct. 28, 1935; letter from Charles S. Dana, town clerk of New Haven, Feb. 17, 1936.

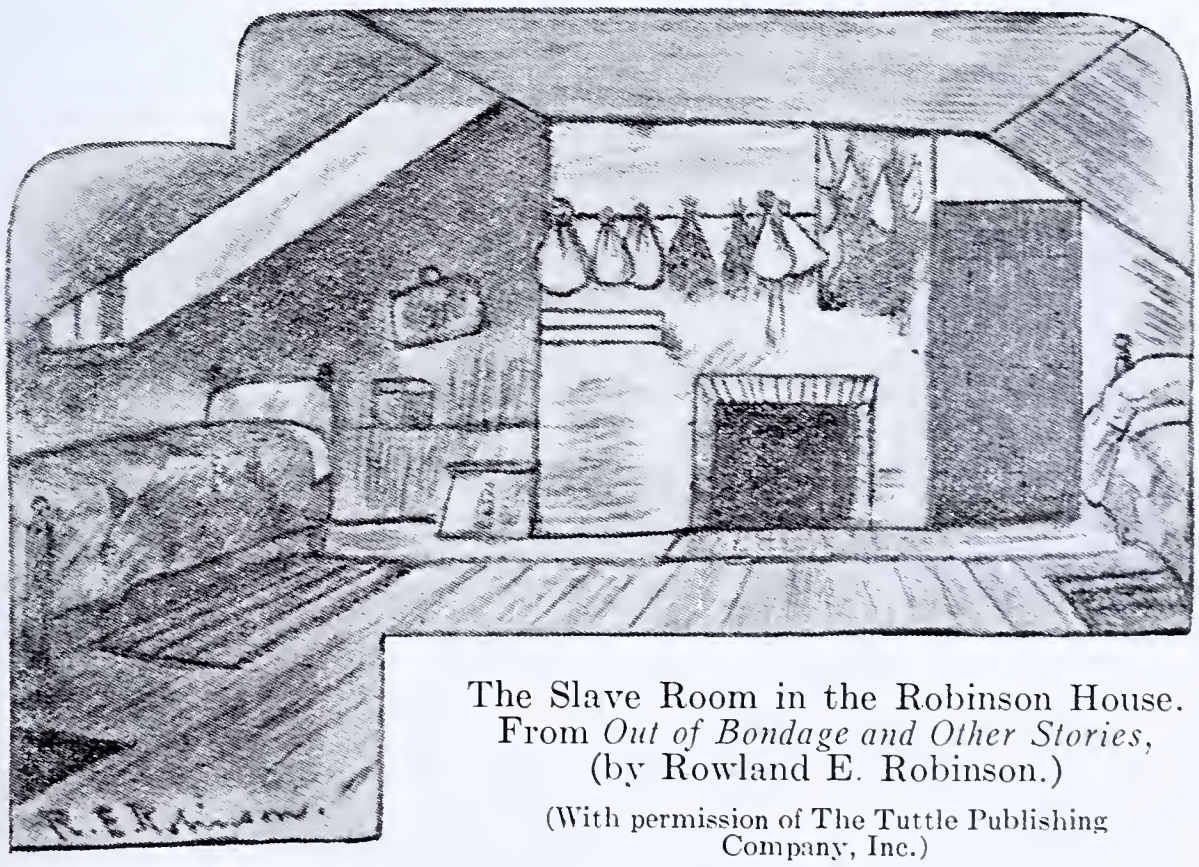
School at Nine Partners, New York, and married Rachael Gilfin of New York City, who fully shared his anti-slavery convictions. Later the couple withdrew from the Society of Friends on account of its indifference towards abolition. Mr. Robinson was one of the early secretaries of the Anti-Slavery Society of Ferrisburgh and vicinity, which was formed in March, 1834, and attained a membership of more than two hundred during the next three years. He was also the chairman of the executive committee of the Vermont Anti-Slavery Society in 1835[16] and enjoyed the friendship of Isaac T. Hopper, William Lloyd Garrison, Lucretia Mott, the Rev. Samuel J. May, Frederick Douglass, and other anti-slavery leaders. Mr. Robinson issued the call for the anti-slavery convention—"The Great Convention," as it was called—which was held in Ferrisburgh on July 17 and 18, 1843.[17]

The Robinsons reserved a room in their house "Rokeby" for fugitive slaves. It was the "east chamber" or "slave room" and adjoined the far end of another bedroom, being entered by an inconspicuous door. The daughter and her three brothers were not permitted to ask questions about the meals which their Aunt Anne King took up there by the back-stairs, when the room was occupied by one or more of the dusky passengers. The fugitives were driven at night to the next station, which might be only a few miles distant or more remote. One time a Southerner appeared at Vergennes, only four miles away, in search of a fugitive who had just been taken north from the Robinson house. Another time a runaway was hiding there when his master, accompanied by the sheriff of Addison County, searched the house. For a little while the poor fellow thought that he was "kotched" but he was not discovered, and that night he was taken seven miles northeast to the home of Nathan C. Hoag, a brother-in-law of Mr. Robinson, who lived in the eastern part of the town of Charlotte. Mr. Hoag was a Quaker preacher and his house was in a secluded spot which pursuers were not likely to find. Sometimes

[16]Letter from Rowland E. Robinson, Aug. 19, 1896.

[17]Letter from Mrs. Elizabeth N. Robinson, Apr. 21, 1936.

The Robinson House at Ferrisburgh, long an active Underground station.



The Slave Room in the Robinson House. From *Out of Bondage and Other Stories*, (by Rowland E. Robinson.)

(With permission of The Tuttle Publishing Company, Inc.)

refugees remained there for months, working in the house or on the farm. When even Hoag's place seemed to be an unsafe retreat, Mr. Robinson drove with his passengers thirty-four miles east to East Montpelier and delivered them to Stephen F. Stevens. The latter also received consignments from his uncle, Deit C. Dail, and occasionally from Colonel Jonathan Peckham Miller of Montpelier. Sometimes Mr. Stevens conveyed fugitives to Mr. Dail.[18] It is likely that some of those carried to East Montpelier were passed on seventeen miles east by north to Hardwick.

Mr. Robinson not only maintained Underground service to East Montpelier and to Hoag's farm but also to places much nearer home, including the farm of Joseph Rogers, which was a mile north of Ferrisburgh and the same distance west of the old stage road. Morah Rogers, the sister and housekeeper of Joseph, recorded in her diary that Mr. Robinson once brought a fugitive to their house who was forwarded eight miles north to McNeil's place in Charlotte and then across Lake Champlain. He may have been directed to Samuel Parr at Peoria, New York, who was in sympathy with the Underground workers. Another man to whom Mr. Robinson took fugitives was Cyrus W. Wickers at North Ferrisburgh Hollow. Mr. Robinson's son, Rowland E. Robinson, remembers that as a boy he saw one or two runaways at a time in the house and once as many as four, one of these with a bowie knife and another with pistols.[19]

Some very interesting stories illustrative of the operations of the Underground Railroad in and about Ferrisburgh have been written by Rowland E. Robinson, who could draw upon his recollections of a score of years for his materials. He had actually heard most of the anecdotes which he wrote and published, although he made use of fictitious names for his characters. He was the youngest of a family of four children and was born at the homestead in Ferrisburgh on May 14, 1833. His writing began about 1887,

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[18]Letter from Rowland T. Robinson, grandson of the Underground agent, Oct. 28, 1935; letter from Rowland E. Robinson, Aug. 19, 1896; Rowland E. Robinson, *Out of Bondage and Other Stories*, (Centennial Edition, 1936), p. 11.

[19]Letter from Rowland E. Robinson, as above; letter from Jos. Poland, Apr. 12, 1897.

when his eyesight began to fail and continued after he became totally blind in 1893. After his demise on October 15, 1900, his wife prepared for publication in book form the stories which constitute the volume, *Out of Bondage and Other Stories.*

In the story, "Out of Bondage," the portly Quaker, Lemuel Varney, drove in his sleigh at dusk, with a fugitive slave under his buffalo robe, for the next "station." The stage-sleigh passed him. Its driver confided to his companion on the box the rumor that Lemuel had "dealin's with the undergraoun' railroad." It happened that this companion was a Southerner who was in search of runaways, although he pretended to be a Pennsylvanian. The driver further confided that he had two fugitives on his coach last summer, one of very light complexion who posed as the master of the other one, who was coal black. They had arrived in Canada several days before slave-catchers came after them from Virginia.

The coach stopped at the tavern in the next hamlet, and the Southerner put up there. In the bar room he listened to some remarks about the anti-slavery meeting at Montpelier, which the Rev. Samuel J. May was prevented from addressing by a mob, and the approval of the mob's action by Hiel, a red-faced fellow, who announced himself as being ready to help catch fugitives and send them back to bondage. Hiel alleged that Quaker Zebulon Barclay of that neighborhood concealed a dozen fugitives in his house every year, on the average.

Robert Ransom, the stalwart son of a Democratic Presbyterian, who was in love with Ruth Barclay, entered the tavern in time to hear some of this conversation and to suspect the Southerner of being a slave-hunter. Meantime, Lemuel Varney delivered his passenger at the Barclay place, hiding him in an enclosed stall filled with straw. The fugitive was suffering from a desperate cold, and his cough revealed his presence to a Canadian farm hand. Hiel drove by, got this information from the treacherous Canadian, and carried it back to the Southerner. Robert Ransom called on Ruth and disclosed his suspicions of slavehunters

being in the neighborhood. The shivering negro was taken upstairs to his hiding-place, and Robert left for home; but Zebulon Barclay was indisposed and could not remove his black guest to a safer place. Consequently Ruth went after Robert, who offered to take him out to the Barclay sugar-house and care for him there. He took along a supply of medicines, bedding, and provisions, made the sick slave as comfortable as possible on the bunk, and built a large fire under the great arch of the structure.

While felling trees in the wood lot, the Canadian saw smoke rising from the sugar-house and went to investigate. That night three men, including Hiel and the Southerner drove up in a sleigh and pounded on the door, demanding admittance. Robert pointed an empty musket through the loophole in the door and dared them to attack. Already sick unto death, the negro drew his last breath, and Robert admitted the slavehunters. The Southerner approached the bunk with handcuffs but found the fugitive's hands cold in death. A dead "nigger" was not the prey he was after, and he and his low companions departed in chagrin.[20]

In "The Mole's Path" Mr. Robinson tells of the discovery of the slave woman, Milly, and her girl, aged five years, in the gambrel-roofed house of the spinster, Hannah Wray, by the mounted postman, Joe Bagley. The mother had peered out of the attic window just as he rode up. During the days of Hannah's father the house had been a frequented station of the Underground thoroughfare which, "like the mole's path beneath the meadow turf, formed a network through our Northern States."

Hannah subscribed to *The Voice of Freedom*, made small contributions to the cause, and collected clothing for the fugitives in Canada West. When Bagley rode up, he told her he had seen somebody of dark complexion peeking out of the garret window. She had him come in, and, while he was drinking a cup of coffee, she told him her secret, and that slavehunters were on the track of the poor runaways, for whom a reward of a hundred dollars had been offered in handbills posted in the neighborhood. She gave

[20]Rowland E. Robinson, *Out of Bondage*, 14–15.

him a letter for Aaron Varney, which she asked him to deliver as promptly as possible. Bagley promised to deliver the letter as soon as he could, but on the way was tempted to report the fugitives, for he needed a younger horse to carry him over his route. Hannah climbed the stairs to the low-roofed attic, slid aside a secret panel, stooped low, and entered the closet-like room behind the great chimney where many fugitives had been secreted during her girlhood. She laid a gentle hand on Milly's turbaned head and reproached her mildly for having shown herself at the window. Then she left the chamber, closing the panel behind her, descended to the kitchen, put on her hood and drab shawl, locked the door as she went out, and walked to the Quaker Meeting-house, for she had heard that one of the handbills was posted on its door. She took the hateful thing down, tore it to bits which the wind scattered, and retraced her steps.

Bagley soon saw a span of horses and a wagon approaching, the occupants of which were Deputy Sheriff Barnes and two strangers. They pulled up and asked him whether the slave woman and her child were at the Wray house. He dismounted and chatted a while. He said they were not there, that Hannah Wray was alone, and that he had met a man at the cross roads, coming from the east, who had seen the two fugitives four miles back, making good time. While talking, Bagley managed to draw the linchpin from the hub upon which he had rested a foot. He slipped this into his pocket, mounted, and rode off. As the wagon went down the next hill, he heard it crash. Two hours later he entered the back yard of Aaron Varney's great square house and delivered Hannah Wray's letter and several newspapers to its owner.

That evening Aaron Varney started with his empty lumber wagon for the Wray place, where he tapped on a window with the handle of his whip. When Hannah drew the curtain back, he told her he had come for the goods and drove into the barn. When the wagon emerged, it contained a hogshead standing on end behind the seat. After driving a mile, Aaron met the deputy sheriff and his companions, but they suspected nothing, and in the gray of the

morning he drove into the yard of a neat farmhouse, tossed a pebble against an upper window, and told his friend David that he had brought him "a hogshead of free labor goods." David came down, helped to lift off the inverted hogshead, and took the fugitives indoors.

On his return journey Bagley stopped to report to Hannah Wray. She knew that he wanted a new horse and gave him her three-year-old bay mare. While riding this animal, he chanced upon Deputy Sheriff Barnes, who asked him where he had got his new horse. He said it was only a colt Miss Wray wished him to break to the saddle. The deputy sheriff was not fooled and remarked, "You can't allers tell by the looks of a toad how fur he'll jump. I swear you be an innercent lookin' cuss."[21]

The third of Mr. Robinson's stories in this series is, "An Underground Railroad Passenger." On a June morning in the year 185– young Thorne went to play "I spy" with the Sherman boys at the next house. While hiding in the hayloft, he was startled to discover a negro under the hay in the darkest corner. The fugitive asked him if this was Abraham Thorne's place. Abraham Thorne was the lad's father and had long kept an Underground station. Young Thorne covered him with hay and later fed him and told him to wait until dark before attempting to cross to his father's house.

That night young Thorne stole across the fields to the Sherman barn and led the black man along fences till they reached the pear-trees in his father's garden. What was the boy's surprise to see the house picketed on all sides and his father talking to two men at the threshold. They were there to find the negro and searched the house, while young Thorne and his protégé hid behind two trees. Mr. Sherman was with the slavehunters, but walked through the garden just between the negro and the boy and told them to go back to his barn and lie low until he summoned them. Needless to say, they hastened back with great caution. Once there, the negro said that during the afternoon Mr. Sherman had found him "in de fodder," accused him of being "a

[21]Rowland E. Robinson, *op. cit.*, 49–60.

runaway nigger," and asked him if he had had anything to eat since he had been there. The negro admitted that young Thorne had brought him something. Then Mr. Sherman disappeared but soon came back with a generous supply. That night the fugitive was to go to the next house, for Mr. Sherman would have "no runaway niggers" around his place. After hiding for another hour the fugitive and young Thorne heard steps ascending the stairs and a well-known voice telling them they could go over to the other house, for the coast was clear. On the following night Abraham Thorne carried the fugitive to the next station northward. A few days later Mr. Thorne thanked Neighbor Sherman for his service. The latter's reply was that he wouldn't have it get out that he had harbored a runaway. If it did they would never call on him again to help catch them.[22]

In the town of Charlotte Messrs. E. H. Converse and Elijah Alexander kept Underground stations. Mr. Alexander's house, which he built in 1848, was the last one in the town on the road east to Hinesburg. It had a vault large enough to seat three or four adult persons under the floor of the second story and back of the chimney, the vault being covered with moveable planks. It made an excellent hiding-place for refugees. Mr. Alexander's house still stands near the junction of three roads. The one from the west comes from Ferrisburgh, the one running east passes through Hinesburg to Williston, and the one running north goes to Burlington. As both Burlington and Williston contained Underground stations, Mr. Alexander was in a strategic location to forward his refugees to either of those places.[23] Williston is but nine miles distant and Burlington eleven. Between the villages of Bristol and Hinesburg there is a locality known as "State's Prison Hollow," through which fugitives were conducted. It was the more eligible for such use in that it lies off the main road and would bring wayfarers from Ferrisburgh out not far from stations in Charlotte.[24]

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[22]Rowland E. Robinson, *op. cit.*, 60–65.

[23]Letter from Superior Judge Alfred L. Sherman, Oct. 25, 1935; letter and map from George G. Hinsdale, Nov. 11, 1935.

[24]Letter from Theron S. Dean, March 10, 1936, who gives as his authority Wallace H. Sherman of Burlington; letter from Asst. Postmaster E. L. Sherwin, March 17, 1936.

The House of Erastus and Hervey O. Higley, an Underground station in Castleton.

The House of Rodney V. Marsh, an Underground station in Brandon.

We know by name more of the Underground operators of Burlington than of any other town in Vermont. These men were Professor Dean of the mathematics department in the University of Vermont, Lucius H. Bigelow, George Wyllis Benedict, the Rev. John K. Converse, Samuel Huntington, Salmon P. Wires, the Rev. Joshua Young, Daniel Roberts, Jr., a native of Manchester, Vermont, and Tony Anthony, a negro. Mr. Young graduated from Bowdoin College in 1845 with Phi Beta Kappa honors, pursued his professional studies at Harvard, and became the pastor of the "new North Church" at the north end of Boston in 1849, having married just after his ordination Mary Elizabeth Plympton, the oldest daughter of Sylvanus Plympton, M. D., a leading physician of Cambridge, Massachusetts. In 1852 Mr. Young was called to the pastorate of the Congregational Unitarian Church in Burlington, where he was soon on intimate terms with Mr. Bigelow, one of his parishoners. Having repeatedly secreted fugitives in Boston, Mr. Young joined his friend in the same service in Burlington. He had witnessed the rendition of Thomas Sims in Boston and knew the particulars of the rescue of Shadrach. On the Sunday after the surrender of Anthony Burns he had preached a sermon on that theme, which was published and was characterized by Wendell Phillips and Thomas Wentworth Higginson as one of the clearest and strongest they had read. Like his fellow-operators, Mr. Bigelow performed the functions of station-agent, conductor, brakeman, or engineer, as the case required, and was not called to account to any one for exceeding his authority.[25]

In Burlington Messrs. Young and Bigelow heard from the lips of fugitives stories of the cruelties practiced upon them and their fellow-slaves and saw on the backs of the narrators the livid scars of the slavedriver's lash. For these poor creatures they had various places of concealment, such as cellars, garrets, barns, houses, and offices. Mr. Young avoided taking them into his house, which stood at the corner of Willard and College streets, but provided a refuge for some of them in his barn. He and his wife have stated

[25]Letter from Mr. Young, Apr. 21, 1893.

that for a short period after the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 they came nearly every day singly, though sometimes in parties of two or three. Thereafter the normal number was two or three a fortnight. In part this is hearsay evidence and would need to be supplemented by the testimony of the other local operators covering the three decades of Underground activity. As Mr. Young was known to Mrs. Elizabeth Buffum Chace and other abolitionists of Valley Falls, Rhode Island, he often received fugitives from there to be forwarded to Canada. In 1859 Mr. Young attended the funeral of John Brown at North Elba, New York, and preached the sermon. Next day he was denounced by the Burlington newspaper, and at once six of the most prominent families of his parish withdrew from the Unitarian Church. At the age of thirty-six he found himself socially ostracized and gave in his resignation. Before the expiration of a year, however, he was called to a church in Hingham, Massachusetts, and thereafter filled pastorates in Fall River and Groton.[26]

Near Mr. Young's house was that of Salmon P. Wires, an insurance man, whose offices were in the Peck Block, on College Street. He sometimes kept fugitives in his inner office, for his wife and daughter objected to having them at home. But the principal Underground agent in Burlington was Lucius H. Bigelow, who lived in a large, three-story, colonial house on lower Church Street, next to the Female Seminary. On the side toward the seminary the house had an ell, which was reserved for the use of fugitives. It seems to have been widely known in the town that Mr. Bigelow looked after such persons and many were directed to him. They were even sent to him from Rutland, sixty miles southward. Once in his charge, their needs were attended to by Messrs. Bigelow, Wires, and Young, who frequently shipped them to Canada by the Central Vermont Railroad, Mr. Bigelow often paying their fares out of his own pocket. This traffic north by rail increased notably after the new Fugitive

[26]Letters from Mr. Young, Apr. 9 and 21, 1893; letter from Mrs. Chace, Apr. 9, 1893; manuscript report of C. E. Edson on the Underground Railroad in Burlington to Prof. Albert Bushnell Hart; *Boston Globe*, Feb. 8, 1904.

Slave Law became effective in October, 1850, because many of the fugitives resident in Massachusetts and Vermont fled through Burlington to Canada. Others passed through from the Southern States direct. The new law also increased the dangers from slavehunters in Burlington. Hence at Vergennes, some twenty miles south of the town, Samuel Barker kept a lookout for the manhunters in order to report their presence to the operators northward. Another precaution to prevent the possible seizure of refugees arriving by rail was to warn them to leave the cars before reaching Burlington and make their way cautiously to Mr. Bigelow's house. Some of the negroes came by rail from Montpelier, or a station farther south. Almost invariably they put in their appearance at night and were detained until it was thought safe to send them on by the cars.[27]

When, however, the stations of the Central Vermont Railroad at Burlington and Essex Junction were watched too closely, the fugitives were taken north in private conveyances, sometimes twenty-five miles to St. Albans, before being put on the cars. At one time Mr. Bigelow's house was under such strict surveillance that he dared not drive out of town with his passengers, but he and Mr. Wires succeeded in spiriting them from the house into freight cars which were ready to start for Canada. On another occasion they took away in their carriages some slaves whose owner was in town. One Saturday night Mr. Bigelow called Mr. Young out of bed to go and see six runaways who were hidden in the former's shed. They led them to Mr. Wires' office, where the negroes, worn out with their previous travels, dropped to the floor and slept. They were hungry and in rags. Mr. Young brought them food from his house, and then he and Mr. Wires gained an entrance to Edward Peck's store and brought them clothing. Three of them were the butler, the coachman, and a house servant from the same plantation in Virginia. They and their companions had got as far as New York City, whence they had traveled by way of Rutland to Burlington. Mr. Wires promptly paid Mr. Peck for the

[27]C. E. Edson's manuscript report; letter from Miss Theodora Agnes Peck, Jan. 5, 1936.

appropriated clothing, the latter appreciating the emergency under which it had been taken. On Sunday night Messrs. Wires and Bigelow drove with the negroes to St. Albans and put them on the cars for Montreal.[28]

In mid-winter a slave woman forty years old came to Burlington, having traveled all the way from Tennessee. She had followed the railroad track from Rutland and was in such a wretched condition that Mr. Bigelow kept her in his house three weeks before sending her on to Canada. One negro man had lived long enough in the town to buy a house and have children born there. He was a waiter in the Lake House, a small hotel next to the railroad station. One day he spied his master in the dining-room and hastened to Mr. Bigelow for help in his extremity. The same afternoon that gentleman drove away with him, put him on the cars, and paid his fare to Canada. On his return Mr. Bigelow told the waiter's wife the reason for her husband's sudden departure and in a few days sent her and the children to join him. He then sold their home and effects and transmitted the gross proceeds to them.[29]

Abial F. Anthony, the son of Tony Anthony, has long been and still is (in 1936) a barber in Burlington, well preserved in body and mind at the age of ninety-six years. He remembers that as a boy he sometimes saw strange negroes about the house during the day, but invariably they were gone the next morning. In age most of them were in their twenties or thirties and came from Virginia, although once in a while there would be one from New Orleans or that region, who had experienced a very hard time in getting through. Some told of having been pursued by bloodhounds.[30] Tony was long a cook both in Burlington hotels and on Lake Champlain steamboats. In the early 1850's he lived on Church Street two or three houses north of the Stanton House, which has been replaced by Hotel Sherwood. In view of his work on the boats it is more than likely that he had an understanding with the Underground operators on

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[28]C. E. Edson's manuscript report.

[29]*Ibid.;* letter from Miss Theodora Agnes Peck, Jan. 5, 1936.

[30]Letter from Theron S. Dean, Feb. 19, 1936.

shore about hiding black passengers on board boat and seeing them safely landed at St. Johns, Canada. Such traffic was regularly handled out of St. Albans Bay.

Of the Underground services of the other operators in Burlington nothing is recorded. Abial Anthony remembers that the Rev. John Kendrick Converse had an active part in putting fugitives through to Canada. After receiving his B. A. degree from Hampden-Sidney College and spending two years at Princeton Theological Seminary, Mr. Converse was pastor of the First Congregational Church in Burlington from 1832 to 1844. In 1834 he married Sarah Allen, the daughter of Congressman Heman Allen of Burlington. For a while the young couple lived in a brick house on Winooski Avenue at the head of Bank Street. Then they removed to the "Griswold place," which was the first site of the Burlington Female Seminary, and about 1844 to the later site of that institution. Ten years later Mr. Converse assumed the principalship of the seminary and also served as the secretary of the Vermont Colonization Society, making many lecturing trips through New England in its behalf. One of his addresses, given before the Vermont society on October 15, 1840, was entitled "The History of Slavery and the Means of Elevating the African Race." From 1850 to 1855 he preached regularly in a church at Colchester, near Burlington, and from 1855 to 1861 in one at Winooski, two miles from the town. Despite his various duties he found the time to respond to "the entreaties of the oppressed." His death occurred in October, 1880. George G. Munson of Burlington, eighty-four years old in 1936, states that reliable men have told him that the Rev. Mr. Converse aided fugitives and sometimes kept them until they were able to go on. He also tells of a tradition that there was an underground passage from Mr. Converse's residence to the seminary nearby for the safety of the fugitives.[31]

Professor Dean was not only interested in the emancipation of the slave but also in the temperance and peace movements. His activities were cut short by his death in

[31]Lizzie S. Converse, *In Memoriam of the Rev. John Kendrick Converse* (1881); letter from Theron S. Dean, March 10, 1936; letters from Miss Theodora Agnes Peck, March 25 and 27, 1936.

1849. Daniel Roberts, Jr., had lived in Manchester, Vermont, until 1856 and been active in the Underground work there. Then he removed to Burlington as a lawyer and again found opportunities to engage in the secret work. George Wyllis Benedict was professor of mathematics and natural philosophy for twenty-two years in the University of Vermont and in 1853 became, with his son, George Grenville Benedict, owner and editor of *The Burlington Free Press*, which was founded in 1827. Mr. Benedict lived on South Prospect Street and was a member of the First Congregational Church. His associate in the Underground service, Samuel Huntington, lived on North Winooski Avenue and was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church.[32]

Sometimes fugitives were driven in private conveyances from Burlington seventeen miles north to the village of Georgia, where an anti-slavery society of one hundred and fifteen members was formed in January, 1836. In the course of the next year or more its membership increased to three hundred. The Underground manager in Georgia was the Rev. Alvah Sabin, who saw to it that the fugitives were transferred six miles farther to St. Albans, which also had an anti-slavery society.[33]

The most prominent man and Underground agent in St. Albans was the Hon. Lawrence Brainerd, who went into the mercantile business for himself at the age of twenty-two years and prospered greatly. Three years later (in 1819) he married Miss Fidelia B. Gadcomb and before long became financially interested in steamboat enterprises on Lake Champlain. In 1847 he superintended the building of the *United States*, the finest boat on the lake at the time. He was chiefly responsible for the construction of the Vermont and Canada Railroad, of which he was long a director, and he promoted the Missisquoi Railroad.[34]

Mr. Brainerd's connection with railroad and steamboat lines enabled him to make use of these facilities in shipping

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[32]Letter from Jos. Poland, Apr. 7, 1897; letter from Miss Theodora Agnes Peck, Jan. 28 and March 25, 1936; letter from Theron S. Dean, Feb. 19, 1936.

[33]Letter from Jos. Poland, Apr. 12, 1897.

[34]*Dict. of Am. Biography*, II, 594.

runaways to Canada. Those sent by water were landed at St. Johns and later at Rouse's Point, while those sent by rail were landed at Montreal. Before the railroads were built Mr. Brainerd had his passengers taken eighteen miles to Mancisco Bay, in Canada, by private conveyance. Mr. G. W. Sanborn, who frequently visited St. Johns on business in those days, has stated that he talked with numerous negroes there who had received hospitality and transportation from Mr. Brainerd.[35] Sometimes information of a shipment of refugees came to the merchant in advance of their arrival, sometimes they were accompanied by friends from down the line, and occasionally they came without guides but with concealed credentials. In any case they received a welcome into the Brainerd home and sometimes were given employment. This was true of Jeremiah C. Boggs, who arrived from South Carolina in 1843. In the latter part of the following year he was recognized by a citizen of St. Albans who knew his master, and Jeremiah would stay no longer. An agent from Liberia happened to appear in the town at this time, and the fugitive followed him to Africa, leaving behind him the reputation of being a giant in strength and a faithful laborer. Another fugitive who tarried in St. Albans was a beautiful quadroon girl. Having been sold to a Louisiana man, she braved the perils of flight rather than suffer the ignominy of the fate her master intended her for. She had a remarkably fine voice and accompanied her songs with the mellow notes evoked from the panels of a bookcase door by drawing her fingers across them.[36]

One more unusual case of a fugitive who sought the aid of Mr. Brainerd deserves mention. He had the dress, manners, and speech of a gentleman. While waiting for the merchant in his store, he engaged in easy conversation with a citizen of the town, both of them being Free Masons. The fugitive told Mr. Brainerd that he had been the favorite slave of a gentleman of the far South, made several trips to Europe with him, and in England learned to read and write

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[35]Letter from Aldis O. Brainerd, Oct. 21, 1895; letter from Mr. Sanborn, Aug. 17, 1893.

[36]Letter from Aldis O. Brainerd, Oct. 21, 1895.

and joined a masonic lodge. On the death of his master he had been sold and was ready for delivery to his purchaser. In desperation he had made the secret signs of his order and been answered by the man who planned and effected his escape. Needless to say, Mr. Brainerd promptly aided the gentlemanly fugitive in getting across the Canadian border.[37]

Other persons of St. Albans who were active in helping runaways were the members of the Stranahan family and William Davis, a negro barber, whose house stood back of the Tremont Hotel. William's grandson, LeRoy E. Satchell, reports that his mother, Sophronia Davis Satchell, repeatedly told him that her father often cared for fugitive slaves in his home.[38]

Transportation by water to Canada was available for fugitive slaves not only out of St. Albans Bay but also from Whitehall, New York, and probably out of Burlington Bay. The steamboats plying on Lake Champlain during the period from 1830 on were the *Franklin*, *Francis*, *Saltus*, *Phoenix*, *Saranac*, *United States*, *Whitehall*, and perhaps others. The regular schedule of trips was made by two day boats and two night boats. In 1852 the north-bound boats ended their journey at Rouse's Point, where there was then railroad connection northward, instead of at St. Johns as formerly. It was not until 1849 that the Vermont and Canada, the Central Vermont, and the Rutland and Burlington railroads were opened.[39] These lines supplied rapid transit for some of the Underground passengers, although Joseph Poland, the principal Underground agent at Montpelier, makes the sweeping assertion that the railroads were "studiously avoided, and the most secluded highways chosen."[40] He adds that it not infrequently proved to be true that "the longest way round was the shortest cut" to the desired haven. It has already been demonstrated, however, that in certain localities fugitives could be entrusted to sympathetic employees on railroad trains with as much safety as if they traveled by the plodding Underground service.

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[37]Letter from Aldis O. Brainerd, Oct. 21, 1895.
[38]Letter from Theron S. Dean, March 10, 1936.
[39]*The Vermonter*, Oct., 1898, pp. 35–7.
[40]Letter from Mr. Poland, Apr. 7, 1897.

Eight miles north of St. Albans is Swanton, where an anti-slavery society of one hundred and fifty members was formed in January, 1837. There the chief manager of Underground traffic was the Hon. William L. Sowles, who directed it eleven miles northeast to Franklin, where a society of one hundred and fifty members had been organized just a year before. During the following months the society doubled in size. Charles Felton was the leading Underground agent here, on the very border of Canada.[41]

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[41]Letter from Jos. Poland, Apr. 7, 1897.

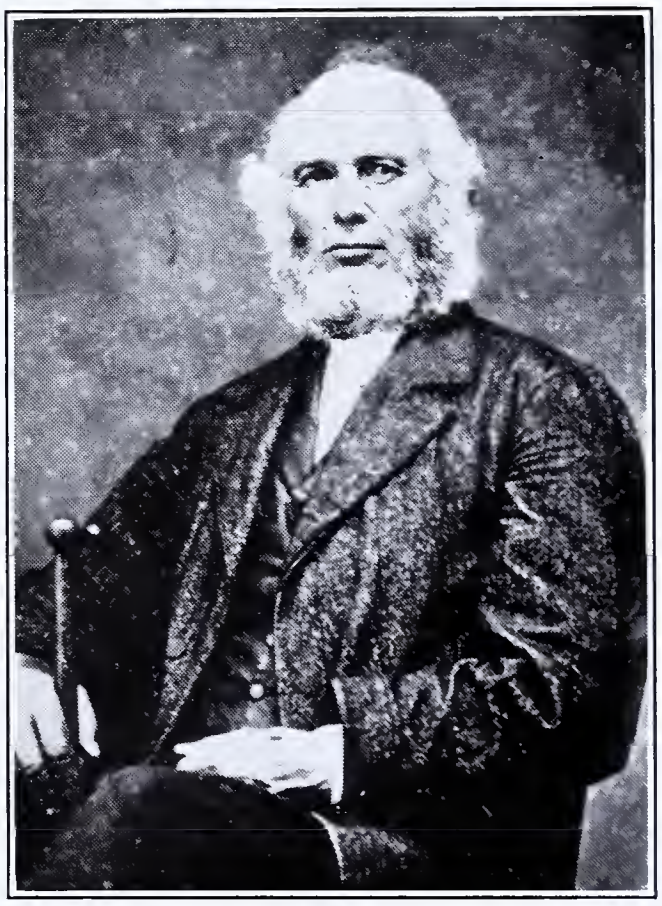
VIII

THE EASTERN TRUNK LINE THROUGH VERMONT

The eastern "trunk line" drew its passengers from northern Massachusetts by way of the Connecticut River Valley, and even from Fitchburg, Worcester, and beyond. In fact some of the fugitives who traveled by this line came from Providence, Rhode Island, whence they were forwarded to Worcester by the Quaker, Daniel Mitchell, for the journey through Vermont.[1] In later days they made more or less of the trip by rail. Those who stopped at Brattleboro were given hospitality by Willard Frost or other abolitionists. According to Mr. C. F. Thompson, who was a clerk in and the proprietor of a store in the main street of the town from 1845 to 1893, there were but few prominent abolitionists in Brattleboro, and Mr. Thompson thinks that not many fugitives stopped there. However, his testimony is of the negative sort. One fugitive did enter his store to ask for aid, which Mr. Thompson gave him in money at the railroad station to pay his fare farther north. The next stop was at Townshend, seventeen miles slightly west of north. There an anti-slavery society was formed in March, 1836, which had forty members a year later. The Hon. W. R. Shafter and Oscar Shafter befriended the fugitives in Townshend. The former directed them usually to Colonel Jonathan Peckham Miller of Montpelier, who was a member of the Legislature in 1831, 1832, and 1833. The next stage of the journey was nine miles to Grafton, where John Barrett and probably two or three other men looked after the runaways. Mr. Barrett lived in a two and a half story frame house which had been built about 1785 by Captain John Barrett. In this old homestead the present owner, Mr. John Barrett, has heard since

[1]See map in W. H. Siebert's *The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts*, facing p. 4; letter from James S. Rogers, Apr. 17, 1897.

Rev. Joshua Young, Unitarian minister and an Underground operator at Burlington.



Rev. "Lame" John Smith, Methodist minister and an Underground operator at Hartland.

childhood that fugitives spent a day or more before being carried on seven miles to Chester.[2]

As early as July, 1834, Chester had an anti-slavery society, which numbered sixty members three years later. There the homes of Ocamel Hutchinson and Asa Davis were havens for the seekers of freedom. Mr. Davis had settled in Chester in 1812 and married Mary Hosmer in 1815. For many years they were members of the Congregational Church. He was a hatter by trade and joined the Liberty Party at its organization. He died at the home of his son, Gilbert A. Davis, in Reading, Vermont, in January, 1873.[3] Seven miles north of Chester is Cavendish, where Ryland Fletcher, later governor of Vermont, shared the adventures of violating the Fugitive Slave laws. Next comes South Woodstock, which was reached by a trip of twelve miles. Colonel Thomas Powers was the notable station-keeper here. He probably co-operated with the Ransoms, proprietors of the old Kedron Tavern (now the Colonial Inn) in the town. This tavern had been established by Daniel Ransom in the early years of the nineteenth century, who was succeeded by his son, Richard Mather Ransom, postmaster in 1828, and he in turn by his son, Richard, Jr. The old tradition that the tavern sheltered fugitives was revived a few years ago when workmen discovered a secret, bricked-up room under the kitchen.[4] Similar hiding-places for slaves have been found in other Underground stations in Vermont.

A journey of four miles farther north brought the travelers to Woodstock, where the Hon. Titus Hutchinson, a former judge of the State Supreme Court put his emancipation principles into practice. Charles E. Lord, a native of the town, often heard his father speak of fugitives having been helped through there on their way to Canada. At Royalton, fourteen miles somewhat west of north, Daniel Woodworth gave a helping hand to negroes on their way to Randolph, a distance

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[2]Letter from C. F. Thompson, Dec. 26, 1895; letters from Jos. Poland, Apr. 12, 1897; letter from John Barrett, Jr., Apr., 1935.

[3]Gilbert A. Davis, *Hist. of Reading, Vt.* (1903); letter from Gilbert F. Davis, Dec. 27, 1935; letter from Blanche L. Daniels, Apr. 5, 1935.

[4]Letter from Jos. Poland, Apr. 12, 1897; letter from Sevilla R. Trude to editor of *The Rutland Daily Herald* about mid-December, 1935.

of eight miles, where Howard Griswold and his associates looked after them. The next trip was four times as long and landed the wayfarers in Montpelier, the State capital.[5]

This was probably the most important Underground Railroad center in Vermont and must have had a group of workers in addition to Joseph Poland and Colonel Jonathan Peckham Miller, whose names are alone remembered in this connection. Mr. Miller lived in Montpelier from 1828 until his death in 1847. He had won his title by fighting with the Greek revolutionists at Missilonghi from 1824 to 1826, where he was known as "the American Daredevil." In June, 1828, he married Sarah Arms, daughter of Captain Jonathan Arms, studied law, and was soon admitted to the bar. He was elected to the Legislature in 1831 and two years later introduced a resolution calling upon the State's senators and representatives in Washington to promote the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia. From then until the end of his life Colonel Miller devoted much of his time and money to the abolition cause. He not only lectured on the subject himself but also placed other lecturers in the field. In 1840 he was one of the two delegates from Vermont to the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London and took a prominent part in its debates.[6] He also labored for the election of Mr. Birney to the presidency. His daughter, Mrs. Abijah Keith, remembers that fugitives were arriving at their house in 1837, when she was seven years old. These were often picked up along the road by the drivers of the six-horse stagecoaches and were delivered at their door. When the colonel came out, the drivers were apt to tell him jokingly that they had brought some of his friends. He always thanked them for their kindness and ushered the newcomers into the house. Mrs. Keith is quite certain that by 1847 the number of Vermonters aiding fugitives had decidedly increased.[7]

For more than a score of years the principal Underground operator in Montpelier was Joseph Poland, a founder of

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[5]Letter from Jos. Poland, Apr. 12, 1897; letter from Charles E. Lord, July 6, 1896.

[6]*Dict. of Am. Biography*, XII, 632–3.

[7]Letters from Mrs. Keith, March 28 and Apr. 4, 1897.

The Voice of Freedom in 1839, when he was about twenty-one years old and later the publisher of *The Green Mountain Freeman.* As a lad in his teens Mr. Poland had witnessed the mobbing of the Rev. Samuel J. May at Montpelier on the evening of October 22, 1835, and the sight had begotten in him "a Pauline devotion" to the cause of the persecuted. A large, dark closet in his printing office was the convenient hiding-place for the negroes brought there, and sometimes he satisfied the curiosity of visitors from rural localities by permitting them to peer in at the trembling occupants. Many years later Mr. Poland thought that the secrecy in handling the fugitives was uncalled for, since there was hardly any danger of their being retaken. This was certainly not true in some other parts of Vermont, where it was necessary to outwit slavecatchers. Mr. Poland has stated that in Montpelier "scores and hundreds" of runaways received their Godspeed to the land of freedom, and that they were sent on their way by one of three branches diverging from the town, each of which he traces for us.[8]

The westernmost of these branches ran eleven miles northwest to Waterbury, where Dr. Arms and Deacons Butler and Parker furnished accommodations and transportation to the fugitives over fourteen miles of road westward to Richmond. There William P. Briggs and E. A. Stansbury passed them on five miles to Williston, whose agents were Amson Byington and William H. French. Seven and a half miles farther is Burlington, where the current of Underground travel from Montpelier mingled with that from Bennington and Manchester, which was brought north by the western "trunk line."[9]

The middle branch out of Montpelier ran twenty-one miles north to Morristown. The operators in this place were the Revs. Reuben Baker and John Gleed and the Hon. John West. Mr. Baker often drove the team by which the negroes were conveyed to Johnson, six miles northwest.[10] Johnson had an anti-slavery society numbering two hundred

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[8]Letter from Jos. Poland, Apr. 7 and 12, 1897.

[9]Letter from Jos. Poland, Apr. 7, 1897.

[10]*Ibid.;* letter from O. Sholes, Apr. 21, 1896.

members in 1837. It also had at least two active Underground workers, namely, A. W. Caldwell and Jonathan Dodge. Six miles farther, still northwest, is Waterville, where the only agent whose name has been preserved was J. M. Hotchkiss. Thence the course was five miles directly west to Cambridge, which had an anti-slavery society of two hundred members in 1837. Mr. Poland mentions Madison Safford as the principal Underground man in Cambridge, but there were doubtless others to help in forwarding the passengers sixteen miles to St. Albans, which, as previously shown, was an important center with facilities for transportation by water, steam railroad, and carriage for the seekers of freedom. However, some of them proceeded from Cambridge nineteen miles northeast to Montgomery, whence they were sent by the Rev. Mr. Green and Jefferson Martin nine miles northwest to Berkshire, which is only three miles from the Canadian boundary. At Berkshire the remembered manager was Andrew Comings. Both Berkshire and Cambridge had anti-slavery societies, the latter formed in January, 1837. Before the end of that year the former numbered seventy-five members. From Waterville a branch extended about fifteen miles north to Enosburg, whence Colonel Samuel Kendall and his associates guided the traffic six miles farther to Berkshire. Colonel Kendall was the secretary of the anti-slavery society of his town, which had one hundred and fifty members in 1837. Montgomery also had its society. There can be no question but that the fugitives passing into Canada from these centers were well cared for.[11]

The eastern route out of Montpelier ran northeast eighteen miles to Hardwick, which had an anti-slavery society of fifty-seven members in 1837. Rev. Kiah Bailey and probably several other men maintained Underground stations here and saw their protogés through to Albany, which is sixteen miles north. There the Rev. George Putnam could request some discreet member of its society to convey the travelers eleven miles east to Barton, where F. W. Kimball performed some such service in getting them through to Troy, fifteen miles northwest. The known operators at

[11]Letters from Jos. Poland, Apr. 7 and 12, 1897.

Troy were Dr. L. C. Moore and the Hon. A. J. Rowell, whose task it was to see that the refugees made the last lap of their journey of seven miles through the Missisquoi River Valley into the Province of Lower Canada.[12]

A CROSS-STATE ROUTE

There was a cross-State route of the Underground Railroad, which Mr. Poland does not mention. It was a branch from Albany and Troy, New York, which entered Vermont by way of the Battenkill River Valley, about twenty-five miles north of the southern boundary of the State. A distinctive thing about the houses that served as stations in the valley was that a row of bricks around their chimneys was painted white. Evidently slaves entering the State by this route were told what to look for. When the youthful James H. Canfield, one time librarian of Columbia University, drove with an uncle through the valley, he learned the meaning of the white-marked chimneys.[13] At Manchester this route crossed the "trunk line" and passed on north of east some twenty-four miles through Chester and seven miles farther to Springfield.[14] At that point Noah Safford was the person most likely to be sought by the wayfarers. He had many customers in that part of the State for the two kinds of straw-cutters he had invented in 1829, and which he continued to manufacture until his death in 1854. A part of his product was shipped by way of Boston to Richmond, Virginia, whither Mr. Safford followed each autumn to make his sales among the planters. There he saw slaves sold to become hands in the cotton and rice fields of the lower South and was thus at once converted to the abolition cause. He lived near his foundry until 1837 and then removed to a small farm half a mile south of the village. His wife Nancy, the daughter of Isaac and Betsy Tower, was a woman of character and energy, just the sort of a person to share in his Underground labors. Besides keeping open house for fugitives, Mr. Safford insisted on a fair hearing for such anti-slavery lecturers as visited Springfield.

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[12]Letters from Mr. Poland, Apr. 7 and 12, 1897.
[13]Letter from Dr. Canfield, Jan. 29, 1897.
[14]Letter from John W. Dow, Oct. 28, 1935.

His daughter, Mrs. Rebecca Safford Holmes, remembers that as a little girl she heard teams arrive in the night, saw food carried to the barn next morning, and again heard the sound of wheels that night as the fugitives were driven away for the next station. Her recollections go back only to 1848, when the traffic from Manchester was going on. She recalls that one of the passengers remained, became the village barber, and married a fugitive girl, by whom he had three children, that they lived in a cottage that was erected for them, and that they all joined the Congregational Church. Evidently while he was still living with the Saffords, this man went to the store one day, only to rush back in great trepidation because he thought he had seen his old master.[15]

A brief interruption is here necessary in order to mention the anti-slavery activities at Rupert, a town ten miles north of the Battenkill River and near the State boundary. In January, 1834, forty-three men of the town formed an anti-slavery society, which increased its membership by eleven during the next three years. Several of these men supplied shelter, food, and sympathy to runaway negroes[16] who came in from New York and were probably taken ten miles southeast to Manchester to continue their journey east or north, as the case might be.

From Springfield Mr. Safford forwarded his fugitives five and a half miles north to Judge Pingree in Perkinsville. The judge secreted them in a closet by the fireplace in his office, giving them entrance by means of a sliding panel. Sometimes, however, the negroes were sent only three miles to the Warren home (later known as the Boynton Place) in North Springfield. From there it was customary to pass them on eight miles to Felchville, where B. D. Bowen's grandfather kept a station. Mr. Bowen's father remembered that as a lad he accompanied his older brother in a wagon or sleigh, according to the season, sometimes by night and sometimes by day, eight miles to the house of Colonel Thomas Powers in South Woodstock.[17] It was also to Colonel Powers that

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[15]Mary Eva Baker, *Folklore of Springfield*, (1922), pp. 64–66.

[16]George S. Hibbard, *Rupert, Vermont, Historical and Descriptive, 1761–1898* (1899), p. 37.

[17]Mary Eva Baker, *op. cit.*, 64–66.

Judge Pingree sent his refugees. It has been stated that a Dr. Crain of Springfield harbored runaways. As there were two Doctors Crain there—Eleazer and his eldest son, Henry F.—we are left in doubt which one is meant. Eleazer married Miss Sarah Foster of Walpole, New Hampshire, and was the leading practitioner in Springfield from about 1815 to 1845. Henry F. graduated from the Medical Department of Dartmouth College in 1831, married Miss Helen A. Porter, of Springfield, and practiced medicine there for fifty years.[18]

Colonel Powers maintained Underground connections with Deacon and Mrs. Morris in Strafford, twenty-one miles north and a little east. He may have done this through the Hon. Titus Hutchinson or other operators in Woodstock. Strafford was a junction, being connected not only with the branch from Woodstock but also with a route which brought the passengers from Lyme, New Hampshire, by way of Thetford and Post Mills Village, a distance of fourteen miles. From Post Mills Village, Lyman Hinckley, a Baptist deacon, escorted the fugitives twenty or more miles to Chelsea, where he delivered them to Wilder Dearborn. Mr. Dearborn was a member of the Congregational Church, lived on a farm a mile east of Chelsea until his death in 1855, and his sons knew of, and may have helped him in, his Underground activities. One of these sons, Franklin Dearborn, was a deacon of the Congregational Church in Chelsea for many years. From Chelsea the fugitives were conveyed twenty-nine miles to Montpelier.[19]

From Perkinsville there may have been a branch running east of north between Ascutney Mountain and Little Ascutney to West Windsor (now Brownsville) and so to South Woodstock. Mrs. Mary Hatch recalls a visit to her grandparents in her girlhood when a fugitive was hiding in the barn of their upper field, to whom her grandfather carried a basket of provisions. Mrs. Hatch mentions no other instances, but there was nothing about the transaction to indicate that it was unusual.[20]

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[18]Letter from Town Library.

[19]Letters from John M. Comstock, Feb. 14 and 27, 1936; biographical data from Springfield.

[20]Letter from Mrs. Hatch.

The cross-State route, as we have seen had its separate extension north as far as South Woodstock, where it joined the eastern "trunk line" which ran up to Montpelier.

UNDERGROUND STATIONS NEAR THE CONNECTICUT RIVER IN WINDSOR COUNTY

It seems curiour that there should have been Underground stations at Windsor, Hartland, Hartland Four Corners, and Norwich, in as much as these places are much nearer the Connecticut River than the towns along the Springfield extension or those along the "trunk line." Either we must suppose that some of the runaways who reached Brattleboro followed the river north and made friends along the way, of whom we have no trace until we get to Windsor, or that some of those traveling by the regular routes straggled over to the river below Windsor and established a new trail. If this was the case it is surprising how numerous these stragglers were. It may be that some fugitives entered Vermont from New Hampshire between Charlemont and Lyme. In the latter case it would seem that the Connecticut Valley continued to be a thoroughfare for the dusky travelers beyond the confines of Massachusetts. Underground evidence from New Hampshire shows that fugitives traveled up the east side of the Connecticut River, beyond Haverhill, then passed northeastward to Little River, which was the junction of an Underground route northward through Franconia and across the Vermont boundary to Lunenburg. Stations beyond Lunenburg have not been discovered.

Windsor lies on the west bank of the Connecticut with the State prison. On State Street across from the prison is the "Gay house," formerly owned and occupied by Judge Jacob, who sheltered runaways. *The Vermont Journal* of April 4, 1935, says that this house has long been known as an Underground Railroad station.[21] Five miles north of Windsor is Hartland. There in the parsonage beside the Methodist Church lived "Lame" John Smith during the first two years of the Civil War. He had aided fugitive slaves in other pastorates and continued to do so in Hartland. Sometimes

[21]Letter from Miss Blanche E. Daniels, Apr. 14, 1935.

his wayfarers departed on foot and sometimes they were called for. He was assisted by Taylor Groce and Solomon Northrup. Solomon had been induced to go from Saratoga Springs with two pretended owners of a circus to Washington, D. C., for the alleged purpose of playing his violin, leaving his wife and children behind him. This was in March, 1841. In Washington Solomon was cast into Williams's Slave Pen, whence he and other human chattels were taken to New Orleans and sold from Freeman's Slave Pen to William Ford of Avoyells Parish, on Red River, in the heart of Louisiana. As part payment of a debt he was transferred by Mr. Ford to John M. Tibeats in the winter of 1842. Tibeats was a brutal master but was worsted in his attempts to punish Solomon. At length Tibeats sold him to Edwin Epps, whose property he remained until his release from slavery. Solomon worked with a Canadian by the name of Bass in building a new house for this master. As Bass was outspoken in his hatred of slavery, Solomon revealed to him the story of his abduction and Bass wrote two letters to persons in New York in his behalf. One of these letters was addressed jointly to Cephas Parker and William Perry in Saratoga Springs. Through these gentlemen Solomon's family learned of his whereabouts in September, 1852.[22]

Under a State law of May 14, 1840, Governor Washington Hunt appointed Henry B. Northup as agent to collect proof of the alleged slave's right to freedom and to take the necessary steps to return him to the State of New York. On January 1, 1853, Mr. Northup arrived at Marksville, Louisiana, where he employed John P. Waddill, an able and honorable attorney, to aid him in locating Bass as the probable writer of the letter to Saratoga Springs. Bass finally admitted that he wrote it and said that Solomon's slave name was "Platt." The proofs of Solomon's right to freedom were found to be satisfactory and Epps signed a paper to that effect. Then Solomon and Mr. Northup took passage down the Red River to New Orleans and thence to Albany, New York. The happy reunion of Solomon with his wife and

[22]Letter from John R. Smith (son of "Lame" John), Apr. 25, 1935; S. Northrup, *Twelve Years a Slave* (1853), 17, 24, 26, 29, 33, 37–38, 48, 63, 65, 76, 89, 105, 162, 265–266, 275, 289.

children took place in Glens Falls in the latter part of January, 1853.[23] After his return Solomon seems to have conducted fugitives from Boston to Hartland and perhaps farther on.[24] "Lame" John Smith was one of his co-workers at Hartland.

Taylor Groce, himself a fugitive slave, had abducted two members of family from the South and succeeded in getting all of them into Canada. Then he devoted himself to helping others to gain their freedom. He once spoke in Mr. Smith's pulpit in Hartland.[25]

A couple of miles west of Hartland is Hartland Four Corners. A short distance from there on the turnpike to Woodstock lived Edmond Barrett, a friend of slaves, of whom it is remembered, in particular, that he aided one who was the son of a slave woman by her master.[26] Norwich, which lies twelve miles north of Hartland and a mile and a half from the Connecticut River, was an important Underground center. It is recorded of Stephen Carver Boardman, one of its citizens, that he aided more than six hundred fugitives. When his son, Charles William, was thirteen years old, a slave, his wife, and their child of four years were brought to the Boardman home by a well-known abolitionist to escape from the pursuit of a slavehunter and his three bloodhounds. They were quickly cared for and placed in a cellar in the cornfield, their shoes having first been wet with spirits of camphor to throw the dogs off their scent.

At eleven o'clock the slavehunter, with his hounds and the United States marshal and his deputies, came to search the premises, but Mr. Boardman refused permission because the posse had no warrant. After hot words and the brandishing of weapons by the slavehunter, they left to obtain the warrant. Near sundown Mr. Boardman sent his son for the cows, but told him to leave the gate open for them to enter while he conducted the negroes from the cellar through the orchard and the woods to the back road. There they were

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[23]S. Northrup, *op. cit.*, 290, 292–293, 296, 298, 309, 310, 319.

[24]Letter from John R. Smith, Apr. 25, 1935.

[25]*Ibid.*

[26]Notes by Walter F. Hatch (a rural mail carrier).

to await Mr. Boardman and his wagon. He arrived at nine o'clock, took them in, drove twenty-five miles to the Central Vermont Railroad—evidently at Randolph Station—and put the negroes on the morning freight train in charge of one of the crew, who had performed the same service many times before.[27] We are not informed of their destination. It may have been Montpelier Junction, Burlington, or beyond. Another Underground agent at Norwich was Deacon Sylvester Morris of the Congregational Church. As a boy his son, George S. Morris, who graduated from Dartmouth College in 1861, frequently saw the family table filled with negroes eating their breakfast. Such sights evoked no question from the members of the household as to the coming or going of the visitors.[28]

VERMONT'S ROLE IN THE UNDERGROUND SYSTEM OF NEW ENGLAND

Most of the fugitive slaves who passed into Canada by way of the New England States did so through Vermont, as did also a few from eastern New York. The most traveled of the Underground routes in Vermont was undoubtedly the "trunk line" from Brattleboro to Montpelier, but it also seems clear that numbers of fugitives kept close to the Connecticut River as far as the northern part of Windsor County before utilizing the "trunk line." During the thirty years of the system's operations the number of passengers steadily increased and reached its peak during the months immediately following the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, but in eastern Vermont runaways were still passing through in the first years of the Civil War. One gets a suggestion of what the traffic must have been in the busier centers from the record of six hundred negroes handled by one agent in Norwich, which was not on a main line. It would be interesting to know how many passed through Montpelier, but we get no information more definite than Mr. Poland's statement that there were "scores and hundreds."

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[27] *Boardman Genealogy*, 1525–1895, pp. 509–510.

[28] Letter from Mrs. Ada L. Brewster, May 20, 1896; letter from John L. Brewster, May 21, 1896.

Numerous refugees doubtless settled in the anti-slavery communities of Vermont, or in secluded places where they felt safe. Those who passed into Canada left the State at various terminals along forty-five miles of the boundary from Lake Champlain eastward. Until 1852 those sent north by steamboat were landed at St. Johns, which thus acquired a good many black residents. From then on the boats landed at Rouse's Point, and the passengers could continue their journey by rail. Some went through to Montreal and lived out their days in that city. As to the numbers of refugees arriving in Lower Canada during the period of the Underground, we get the most inadequate information from the *Census Reports* of the Dominion of Canada. The first issued is that of 1851, which shows only eighteen negroes or mulattoes in Lower Canada, of whom eleven were around St. Hyacinthe. A decade later the number had increased to one hundred and ninety, of which forty-six were in the City of Montreal and one hundred and four in the County of Ottawa.[29] These figures certainly fall far short of the facts, even supposing that the death rate was exceedingly high among the refugee settlers.

[29]Letter from Aegidius Fauteux, chief librarian of the Public Library of City of Montreal, Feb. 24, 1936.

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